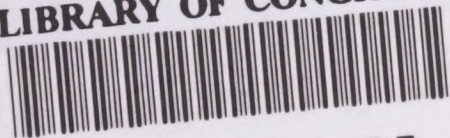
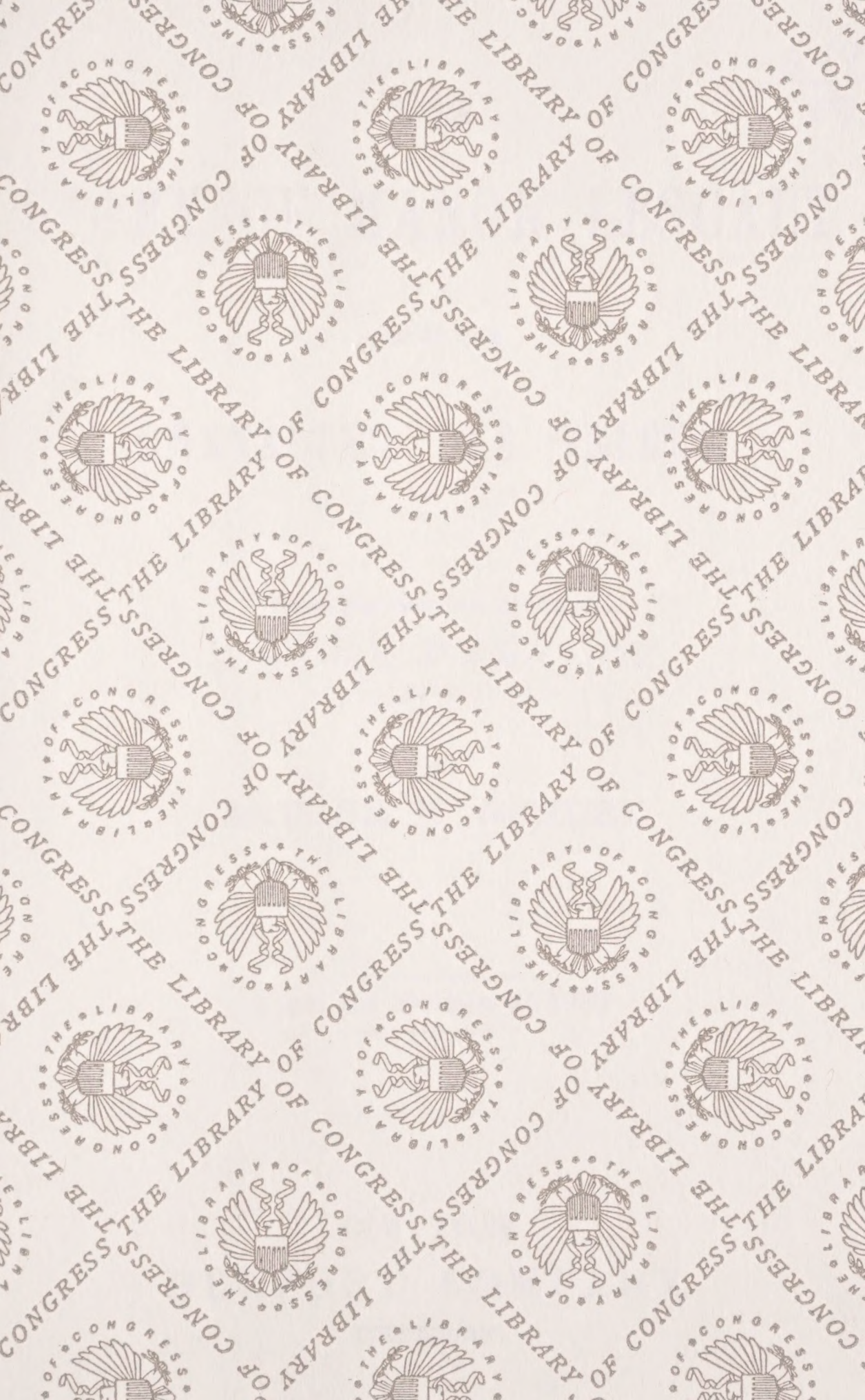


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THE

STORY OF MANON LESCAUT

AND OF THE

CHEVALIER DES GRIEUX

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

L'ABBÉ PRÉVOST

antoine François Prevost

BY

ARTHUR W. GUNDRY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH I might have introduced the Adventures of the Chevalier des Grieux in my own Memoirs, it seemed to me that, as there was no necessary connection between the two, the reader would find it more satisfactory to have them separately. The thread of my own story would have been too much interrupted by a digression of such length. Far as I am from laying any claim to precision as a writer, I am yet well aware that a narrative should be free from details which render it cumbersome and involved. To quote the maxim of Horace :

Ut jam nunc dicat jam nunc debentia dici,
Pleraque differat, et præsens in tempus omittat."

Indeed, so weighty an authority is not needed to establish so simple a truth ; for this rule has its origin in common-sense.

If the story of my life afforded the public some interest and entertainment, I may venture to promise them equal pleasure in the perusal of the present sequel to it. They will find, in the adventures of M. des Grieux, a terrible example of the tyranny of the passions. I have before me the task of depicting a headstrong youth who rejects happiness, to plunge of his own accord into the deepest

misery ; who, possessed of every quality necessary for the attainment of brilliant distinction, yet, of his own choice, prefers an obscure and roving life to all the advantages which nature and fortune have placed at his command ; who foresees the sorrows which await him, without making an effort to avert them ; who feels them so keenly as to be overwhelmed by them, and yet does not avail himself of the remedies which are continually offered him, and which might at any moment bring them to an end : in short, a character made up of contradictions ; a mixture of vices and of virtues, a perpetual contrast of lofty sentiments and of unworthy conduct — such is the groundwork of the picture which I am about to present.

To judicious minds, a work of this nature will not appear a waste of labor. Besides the entertainment to be derived from its perusal, it will be found to contain but few incidents that may not be turned to good account as lessons in morality ; and I take it to be no slight service to the public to instruct and amuse them at the same time.

No one who reflects over the precepts of morality can fail to be amazed at observing how they are at once both honored and neglected ; or to ask himself the reason of this strange capriciousness of the human heart, which leads it to delight in ideals of virtue and perfection, only to deviate from them in practice. Let any one of a fair degree of intelligence and cultivation consider what is the most frequent subject of his conversations, or even of his solitary meditations. He will readily perceive that they nearly always turn upon some moral theme. The most delightful moments of his life are those which he spends, either in solitude or with some friend, in open-hearted communion on the charms of virtue, the joys of friendship, the means of attaining happiness, the frailties of our

nature, which alienate us from it, and the remedies by which they may be counteracted. Horace and Boileau allude to such converse as one of the most beautiful among the features which they include in their pictures of a happy life. How comes it, then, that one falls so easily from these lofty speculations, and so soon finds one's self on a level with the common run of mankind? I am much deceived if the reason I am about to allege for it does not fully explain this contradiction between our ideals and our actions. It is this : all the precepts of morality being no more than vague and general principles, there is great difficulty in applying them specifically to the details of life and duty.

Let us illustrate the matter by an example. All generous natures feel that benevolence and humanity are estimable virtues, and are eager to display them. At the very moment for putting them into practice, however, they often pause and hesitate, debating whether this be indeed a proper occasion for their exercise, not being quite sure as to how far they should be carried, and doubting whether the object may not be a mistaken one. A hundred difficulties obtrude themselves, such as the fear of being duped when desirous of being charitable and generous ; of betraying weakness by appearing too tender-hearted and impressible ; in a word, of exceeding or of falling short of the duties which are too vaguely comprised in the terms "humanity" and "benevolence." In such uncertainty, only previous experience or example can be relied upon to guide the impulse of the heart to a wise decision. Now, this needful experience is an advantage which cannot be freely acquired by every one. It is dependent upon the surroundings amid which our lot may have been cast, and these differ in the case of every one of us.

A vast number of persons, therefore, are left with

nothing but precedent to serve them as a standard in the practice of virtue.

It is precisely this class of readers to whom works of the present nature are likely to prove of the utmost benefit; if their author, that is to say, be a man of strict rectitude and good judgment. Each incident related in them carries with it a certain degree of enlightenment, and serves as a lesson to supply the place of experience. In each adventure may be found an example for imitation; all that is lacking is its application to the circumstances of the individual case. The whole work, in fact, may be regarded as a treatise on morality, pleasantly reduced into practice.

There may, perchance, be readers austere enough to think that it ill-beseems a man of my years to take up his pen for the purpose of relating a story of love and adventure. To all such I would say that if there be any truth in the above reflections, I need no other justification; while, if they be false, my error must be my excuse.

THE STORY OF MANON LESCAUT.

PART FIRST.



CHAPTER I.

I MUST carry my reader back to the period of my life at which I first met the Chevalier des Grieux. This was some six months prior to my departure for Spain. Although I rarely emerged from my retirement, deference to the wishes of my daughter occasionally led me to undertake various little expeditions, which I was in the habit of making as short as possible.

I chanced one day to be returning from Rouen, whither I had gone at her request to attend the trial of a cause before the Parliament of Normandy, which involved the right of succession to an estate bequeathed to me by my grandfather on the maternal side, and my title to which I had made over to her. Having retraced my steps by way of Evreux, where I slept the first night, I arrived the next day in time for dinner at Passy, which is some five or six leagues further on. On entering this town I was surprised to observe a general commotion among its inhabitants. They were hurrying out of their houses and running in a crowd to the door of a wretched hostelry,

in front of which were standing two covered wagons. From the appearance of the horses, which were still in harness, and reeking from the heat and fatigue of their journey, I surmised that the two vehicles had only just arrived.

I stopped a moment to inquire the cause of the tumult, but could obtain little enlightenment from the inquisitive crowd, who paid no heed to my questions, but went on pushing and fighting among themselves in their eagerness to reach the inn. At last an archer,* wearing a cross-belt and carrying his musket on his shoulder, made his appear-



ance at the door. Beckoning him towards me, I asked him to tell me what was occasioning all this hubbub.

“Nothing, sir,” he replied, “nothing but a dozen girls of the town whom I and my comrades are taking to Havre-de-Grace, where we are going to put them aboard ship for America. There are some pretty ones among them, and that, apparently, is what excites the curiosity of these good country-folk.”

I should have passed on after this explanation, had not my attention been arrested by the exclamations of an old woman, who came out of the inn wringing her hands and

* The armed police of Paris were called *archers* at the period of this story.—TRANSLATOR.

crying that she could not bear to see such horrible barbarity, it was enough to excite the pity of any one but a savage.

“What is amiss?” I asked her.

“Oh, sir!” she replied, “go in yonder and see if ’tis not a heart-rending sight.”

Urged by curiosity I dismounted, leaving my horse to the care of my groom. I had some difficulty in effecting an entrance, but pushing my way through the crowd, I beheld, in truth, a most touching spectacle.

Among the twelve girls who were chained together by



their waists in two groups of six each, was one whose face and whole appearance were so little in keeping with her present situation that under any other circumstances I should have taken her to be a person of the highest rank.

The sadness of her expression, and her soiled and bedraggled dress, detracted so little from her beauty, that I was filled with pity and respect as I looked at her. She endeavored, however, to turn herself away as far as her chain would allow, in order to conceal her face from the gaze of the bystanders. There was something so unaffected in her efforts to hide herself, that they seemed to be prompted by an innate sense of modesty.

The six guards who were in charge of this unhappy

band being also in the room, I drew aside the one who was in command, and asked him to give me some account of how this lovely girl had met with such a fate. He could do so only in a very general way.

“We took her from the *Hôpital*,” said he, “by order of the Lieutenant-General of Police. She was not shut up there as a reward for good conduct, that is certain. I have questioned her several times on our way here, but she obstinately refuses to reply. I received no orders to treat her more kindly than the others; but for all that I have shown her some consideration, because she appears to me a trifle better than her companions. Yonder is a young man,” added the archer, “who may be able to tell you more than I can concerning the cause of her disgrace. He has followed her all the way from Paris, and has scarcely stopped weeping for a moment. He must be her brother, or her lover.”

I turned toward the corner of the room where the young man was sitting. He appeared to be buried in deep thought. I never beheld a more striking picture of grief. He was very simply dressed; but it did not require a second glance to perceive that he was a man of birth and education. He rose as I approached him, and his features, his expression, and his every movement bore the mark of such refinement and nobility that I felt myself instinctively drawn towards him.

“Do not let me disturb you,” I said, seating myself beside him. “Will you be kind enough to gratify the curiosity which I feel to learn something of the history of that fair creature, who seems to me little fitted for the sad condition in which I now see her?”

He replied frankly that he could not let me know who she was, without disclosing his own name, which he had strong reasons for desiring to keep a secret.

“However,” he continued, pointing to the archers as he spoke, “I can tell you what those wretches know only too well: that I love her with such passionate devotion as to make me the unhappiest of men. I left no means untried at Paris to obtain her release. Entreaties, stratagem, and force proving alike in vain, I resolved to follow her to the very ends of the earth, if need be. The ship which carries her to America shall take me with her. But, so utterly inhuman are those cowardly rascals,” he added, alluding to the archers, “that they will not allow me to go near her. My intention was to make an open



attack upon them when some leagues outside of Paris. I had four men with me, whom I had paid liberally to promise me their assistance. The traitors made off with my money and left me single-handed. Seeing that it was impossible to accomplish anything by force, I put up my sword and proposed to the archers that they should at least allow me to accompany them, promising to reward them if they would do so. Their cupidity led them to consent. They insisted upon being paid every time they granted me leave to speak to my mistress. The contents of my purse were soon exhausted, and now that I am penniless they have the barbarity to thrust me away brutally

whenever I take a step towards her. Only a moment since, upon my venturing to approach her in spite of their threats, they had the insolence to raise the butts of their muskets against me. In order to satisfy their greed and to fit myself for continuing the journey on foot, I now find myself forced to sell my horse, which, sorry animal though it is, has carried me so far on the way."

Although he related all this with apparent calmness, tears stood in his eyes as he concluded. The whole incident struck me as strange and pathetic in the extreme.



"I will not press you," I said, "to confide your secret affairs to me; but if I can be of assistance to you in any way, I gladly offer you my services."

"Alas!" he replied, "I have abandoned all hope. There is nothing left for me but to resign myself to my fate, cruel as it is, and go to America, where my love and I will at least be free together. I have written to one of my friends, who will send me some money to Havre-de-Grace. My only anxiety is as to how I am to reach there, and as to how I can procure that poor girl," he added, glancing sadly at his mistress, "some little comfort on the way."

“Well,” said I, “I will solve that difficulty for you. Pray oblige me by accepting this money. I only regret that I cannot serve you in any other way.”

I then gave him four *louis d’or*, taking care not to be observed by the guards as I did so ; for I shrewdly conjectured that if they suspected him of having such a sum about him they would put a higher price on their favors. It even occurred to me to strike a bargain with them to allow the young lover to talk with his mistress at his pleasure all the way to Havre. Beckoning to the archer



in command, I made the proposition to him. In spite of his effrontery, it seemed to put him to the blush.

“You see, sir,” he responded with some embarrassment, “we should have no objection to his speaking to the girl ; but he is not satisfied with that. He wants to be continually at her side. That puts us to no little trouble, and it is only fair that he should pay for the inconvenience he causes us.”

“How much, think you, would prevent your feeling the annoyance ?” I asked him.

He had the impudence to ask me for two *louis*, which I at once gave him, saying as I did so :

“Mind you, sirrah ! Do not attempt any rascality ; for I am going to leave my address with this young

gentleman, so that he may let me know of it if you do ; and I have influence enough to see that you are punished, depend upon it."

The affair thus cost me six *louis d'or*.

The young stranger expressed such deep gratitude and thanked me so gracefully that I was confirmed in my impression that he was of noble birth, and fully deserving of the liberality I had shown him. I spoke a few words to his mistress before I left the room. She answered me so sweetly and with such charming modesty of manner that,



as I went out, I fell to musing for a long while over the incomprehensibility of the female character.

Returning, as I did, to my life of solitude, I was left in ignorance of the sequel of this adventure. The lapse of two years had driven the matter completely out of my mind, when chance again afforded me an opportunity of learning the full particulars of the affair.

I was returning from London, with my pupil, the Marquis of —, and had just arrived at Calais. We put up, if I remember rightly, at the Golden Lion, where, for some reason, we were obliged to spend the whole of that day and the following night. As I was taking a walk through the streets in the afternoon, I caught sight of the same

young man I had met at Passy. He was very poorly clad, and much paler than when I had first seen him. He was carrying an old portmanteau under one arm, and had evidently only just arrived in the town. His was too handsome a face to be easily forgotten, however, and I knew him again immediately.

“I cannot let that young man pass without speaking to him,” I said to the marquis.

He was overjoyed when he, in turn, recognized me.

“Ah! sir,” he exclaimed, kissing my hand, “I am indeed glad to have an opportunity of assuring you once again of my undying gratitude!”



I asked him whence he had come. He replied that he had just arrived, by sea, from Havre-de-Grace, whither he had returned from America only a short time since.

“From your appearance I fear that you are not very well off for money,” said I; “if you will walk on to the Golden Lion, where I am lodging, I will be with you in a few minutes.”

I soon returned, in fact, full of impatience to learn the details of his misfortunes and all the particulars of his voyage to America. I embraced him cordially, and gave orders that he should be allowed to want for nothing.

He did not wait to be urged to relate the story of his life.

“You treat me with such noble generosity, sir,” he said to me, “that I should reproach myself with base ingratitude were I to withhold anything from you which it would interest you to hear. I will tell you, if you care to listen, not only my misfortunes and sufferings, but the follies and misdeeds for which I have most cause to blush ; and I am sure that, while you may condemn, you cannot help but pity me.”

[I must here explain that I committed the young man’s story to writing almost immediately after hearing it, and that the reader may consequently rest assured of the absolute accuracy and fidelity of the following narrative. Its fidelity extends, I may say, even to the relation of the reflections and sentiments to which the young adventurer gave expression in language of the utmost grace.

Here, then, is his story ; to which I shall add not a single word, from beginning to end, that is not his own.]

CHAPTER II.

I WAS seventeen years of age, and was completing my studies in philosophy at Amiens, where I had been sent by my parents, who belonged to one of the best families in P——. The life I led was so blameless and correct that my masters held me up as an example to the whole college ; not that I made any extraordinary efforts to merit this commendation, but I was naturally of a sedate and gentle temperament. I applied myself to study as a matter of inclination ; and the evidences which I gave of an instinctive aversion from vice were put to my credit as positive virtues. My rank, my rapid progress in my studies, and a certain comeliness of person, had secured me the acquaintance and esteem of all the leading people of the town.

I acquitted myself so much to the general approbation at my final public examinations, that his lordship, the Bishop of the Diocese, who was present on the occasion in question, proposed that I should enter upon an ecclesiastical career, in which I could not fail, he told me, to attain greater distinction than in the Order of Malta, for which my parents had destined me. By their wish I was already wearing the cross of that Order, with the title of the Chevalier des Grioux.

Vacation being now at hand, I was preparing to return home to my father, who had promised soon to send me to the Academy. My only regret on leaving Amiens was that I had to part with a friend there to whom I had always been tenderly attached. He was my elder by a few years. We had been brought up together; but, as his family was far from wealthy, he was obliged to enter the Church, and had to remain at Amiens after I left, in order to pursue the studies demanded by that calling.

He was possessed of so many good qualities that I could not even begin to enumerate them now. You will find him displaying the best of them in the course of my story; and, above all, a zeal and unselfishness in friendship which surpass the most renowned examples of antiquity. Had I, in those days, followed his counsels, I should have always been a virtuous and happy man. Had I even heeded his rebukes when deep in the gulf into which my passions dragged me, I should have rescued something from the shipwreck of my fortune and reputation. But he has reaped no other fruit from his brotherly solicitude than the grief of finding it all in vain, and of being sometimes harshly requited for it by an ungrateful wretch, who has more than once actually resented it as officious.

I had settled on the time for my departure from Amiens. Alas, that I did not fix it for one day sooner! I should then have gone home to my father with my innocence all unsullied.

The very evening before I was to have left Amiens, as I was taking a walk with my friend, whose name was Tiberge, we saw the Arras *diligence* arrive, and strolled after it to the inn at which these conveyances set down their passengers. We were actuated merely by idle curiosity. Some women alighted, and withdrew at once; but one, a very young girl, remained standing in the

court-yard, while an elderly man, who appeared to be acting as her escort, busied himself in getting her baggage taken out of the boot.

Her beauty struck me as being so remarkable that I—who had never given a thought to the difference between the sexes, nor bestowed even the most passing attention upon a woman—I, be it repeated, whose virtue and propriety were the subjects of general eulogy, felt myself suddenly and madly enamoured of her. One of the defects of my character had always been that I was excessively timid and easily disconcerted ; but now, so far from being



restrained by that weakness, I advanced boldly towards her who was already the mistress of my heart.

Although she was even younger than myself, she received my polite advances without any signs of embarrassment. I asked her what brought her to Amiens, and whether she had any acquaintances in the town. She replied ingenuously that she had been sent there by her parents to enter a convent. Love, though it had been enthroned in my heart only a few short moments, had already so quickened my perception that I saw in this intention a mortal blow to all my hopes. From the manner in which I talked to her, she soon guessed what was passing in my mind ; for she was by no means so unsophisticated as

myself. She was being forced to take the veil against her will—doubtless in order to curb that love of pleasure which had already asserted itself in her character, and which, in after days, was the cause of all her misfortunes and my own. I combated the cruel intentions of her parents with all the arguments that my new-born love and scholastic eloquence could suggest. She affected neither severity nor disdain, and told me, after a moment's silence, that she foresaw, only too clearly, how unhappy she was going to be ; but that it was apparently the will of Heaven, as there was no way of escaping her fate.

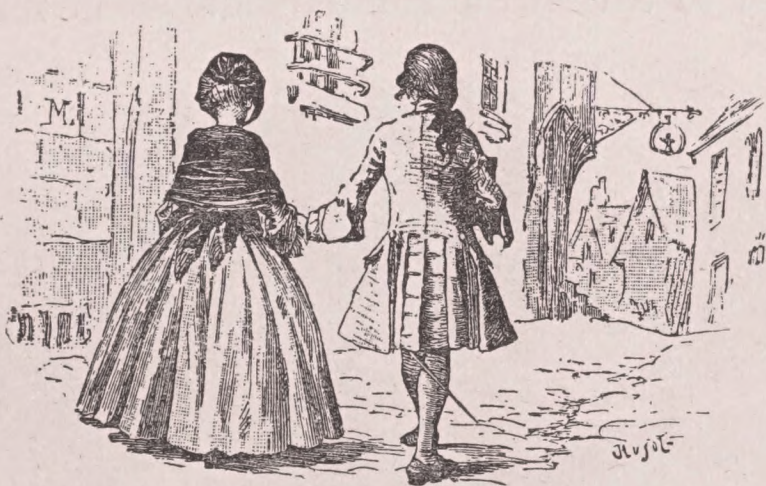


The tender glances and the winning air of sadness with which she accompanied these words—nay, rather let me say, the dominating influence of my destiny, which was hurrying me on to my ruin—did not allow me a moment's time for reflection as to what my answer should be. I assured her that if she would but rely on my honor and on the deep affection with which she had already inspired me, I would lay down my very life to deliver her from the tyranny of her parents, and to secure her happiness.

Many a time have I wondered, in reflecting over this incident, how I succeeded in mustering up such boldness and facility of expression ; but Love would not rank among the gods did he not often work miracles.

I added much more in the way of urgent entreaty. The fair stranger was well aware that men are not deceivers at the age I had then reached. She frankly admitted that if I could think of any way of rescuing her from her impending fate, she would consider herself indebted to me for what was more precious than life itself—her liberty.

I once more declared that there was nothing I would not undertake on her behalf; but, being too inexperienced to be able to hit upon a plan for aiding her then and there, I confined myself to this general assurance, which was



not calculated to be of much assistance either to her or to myself.

Her aged Argus now making his approach, my hopes would have been baffled, had she not been gifted with enough ready wit to make up for my own deficiencies in that respect. As her guardian joined us, I was not a little surprised to hear her address me as cousin, and tell me, with the utmost composure, that as she had been so fortunate as to meet me at Amiens, she would postpone her entrance into the convent until the following day, in order that she might have the pleasure of supping with me. I was not slow to catch the spirit of this ruse, and recommended her to put up at an inn, the landlord of which was devoted

heart and soul to my service, having been my father's coachman for many years before he had established himself at Amiens.

I conducted her there myself, despite the muttered objections of her old protector; while my friend Tiberge, who was completely mystified by this scene, followed me without uttering a word. He had not overheard our conversation, having occupied himself in pacing up and down the court-yard while I was wooing my fair one. Dreading his virtuous scruples, I rid myself of his presence by asking him to execute a small commission for me; and



thus had the happiness, when we reached the inn, of having my heart's mistress entirely to myself.

I soon discovered that I was not the mere boy I had hitherto supposed myself to be. My heart expanded under the influence of a thousand sensations of pleasure of which I had never so much as dreamed. A delicious warmth suffused itself through all my veins, and I yielded up my whole being to an indescribable ecstasy which robbed me for some time of the free use of my voice, and found expression only in my eyes.

Mademoiselle Manon Lescaut—for such, she told me, was her name—seemed to be well pleased at the effect pro-

duced upon me by her charms ; and I thought that I detected signs of no less emotion on her side. She confessed that she did not regard me with indifference, and that liberty would be all the sweeter to her if she owed it to me. She was eager to know who I was, and looked upon me with increased favor when I told her ; for, being of humble origin herself, it flattered her self-esteem to find that she had made the conquest of a lover of my rank. We then began to consider by what means we could gain the happiness of mutual possession.

After much discussion we concluded that there was no



other course open to us but flight. We should have to elude the vigilance of her escort, who, though only a servant, was not a man to be trifled with. We arranged that I should order a postchaise during the night, and that I should return to the inn early in the morning, before he was awake, when we would steal away quietly, and make straight for Paris, getting married upon our arrival there. I had about fifty crowns, the fruits of my small savings, while she had nearly double that amount. We imagined, inexperienced children that we were, that this sum was inexhaustible ; and we reckoned no less confidently upon the success of the rest of our plan.

After having eaten my supper with greater zest than I had ever before felt for that meal, I withdrew to put our project into execution. My arrangements were the more easily made from the fact that what little luggage I had was already packed in preparation for my intended return home the following day. I had thus nothing further to do than to have my trunk removed, and to hire a chaise, to be ready at five o'clock in the morning—at which hour the town gates would be opened. But I encountered an unforeseen obstacle, which came within an ace of defeating my whole scheme.

Tiberge, though only three years my elder, was a young man of mature judgment and very virtuous habits of life. He loved me with a deep affection such as is rarely to be met with. The beauty of Mademoiselle Manon, my eagerness to escort her, and the evident pains I had been at to get rid of him, had all combined to awaken some suspicion of my infatuation in his mind.

He had not ventured to return to the inn where he had left me, for fear that I might be annoyed at his doing so, but had gone to await me at my lodgings, where I found him when I came in, although it was ten o'clock in the evening. His presence disconcerted me, and he was not long in perceiving that I found it irksome.

“I am sure,” he said to me frankly, “that you have some project in mind which you are anxious to conceal from me; I can see it by your manner.”

I replied, brusquely enough, that I was not obliged to account to him for all my intentions.

“No,” he responded, “but you have always treated me as a friend, and that relation presupposes some degree of confidence and candor.”

He pressed me so earnestly and so persistently to disclose my secret to him, that, never having been in the

habit of concealing anything from him, I took him entirely into my confidence regarding my passion for Manon.

He listened to my avowal with an expression of disapproval in his face which made me tremble. Above all, I repented my folly in divulging my project of flight to him. He told me that he was too sincerely my friend not to oppose it by every means in his power. He would first, he said, urge upon me every consideration which he thought likely to dissuade me from it, and if I did not then renounce this unworthy determination of mine, he would notify persons who would effectually prevent its execution.



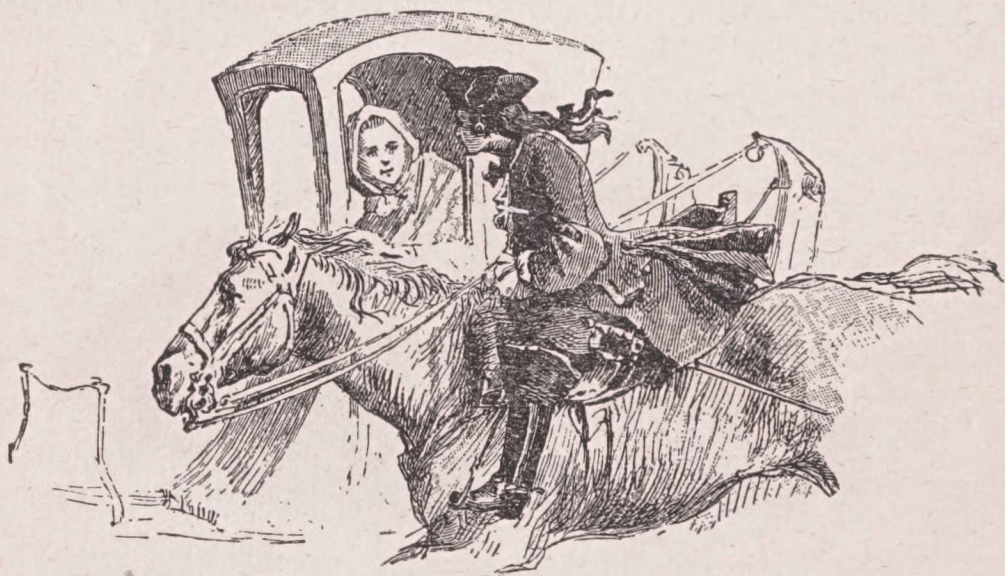
He thereupon lectured me gravely for more than a quarter of an hour, concluding with a repetition of his threat of informing against me unless I gave him my word of honor that I would not be guilty of conduct so opposed to all the dictates of reason and morality.

I was in despair at having betrayed myself at so awkward a juncture. However, love had sharpened my wits not a little during the last few hours, and, reflecting that I had not informed him that my plan was to be carried into effect the next day, I resolved to throw him off the scent by means of a slight equivocation.

“Tiberge,” I said to him, “I have hitherto always believed you to be my friend, and I wished to put you to the

test by confiding in you as I have done. It is true that I am in love; I have not deceived you on that score; but, as to my running away, that is not an affair to be undertaken at hap-hazard. Come for me at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, and I will, if possible, let you see the fair object of my passion. You shall then judge whether or not she is worthy of my taking such a step for her sake."

Assuring me again and again of his friendship for me, he at last left me alone.



I occupied the night in putting my affairs in order, and towards daybreak hastened to the inn, where I found Mademoiselle Manon awaiting me. She was at her window, which looked out on the street; so that, catching sight of me as I approached, she came down and opened the door for me herself. We stole softly away. She had nothing with her but a bundle containing some changes of linen, which I carried. We found the chaise awaiting us, and quickly left the town behind us.

I shall relate in due course how Tiberge acted when he realized that I had deceived him. His friendly zeal on my behalf lost none of its ardor, and you will see to what

lengths he carried it, and that tears may well rise to my eyes at the thought of how I have always requited his devotion.

We pushed on our way with such speed that we arrived at St. Denis before night-fall. I had ridden beside the chaise all the way, and this had scarcely allowed of our speaking to one another, except while changing horses ; but now that we were drawing so near to Paris, and felt that we were almost out of danger, we allowed ourselves time to partake of some refreshment, not a morsel having



passed our lips since we left Amiens. Deeply enamored as I was of Manon, she succeeded in persuading me that she felt no less tenderly toward me. So little restraint did we place upon our caresses, that we had not even patience to wait until we were alone to indulge in them. Our postilions and the inn-keepers along the road stole wondering glances at us ; and their surprise at seeing such passionate love-making between two children of our age was very apparent.

Our projects of marriage were forgotten at St. Denis. We defrauded the Church of her rights, and found ourselves united without having paused to reflect.

It is certain that with my affectionate and constant nature, I should now have been happy for the rest of my life, had Manon remained faithful to me. The better I grew to know her, the more fascinating qualities did I discover in her. Her mind, her heart, her gentleness, and her beauty, were all links in a chain by which it was so sweet to be bound, that I should have asked for no other happiness than to be held captive by it forever. Yet, by a terrible caprice of fate, the very thing which might have given me complete felicity is that which has brought me to the verge of despair! I am at this moment the most miserable of men, in consequence of that self-same constancy from which I might justly have expected a life of supreme contentment and the most perfect rewards of love!

CHAPTER III.

ON our arrival at Paris we took a furnished apartment in the Rue V—— and (to my sorrow, as events proved) near the house of Monsieur de B——, a well-known Farmer-General.* Three weeks went by, during which I was so entirely absorbed in my passion that I scarcely gave a thought to my family, or to the grief which my father must have felt at my absence. As, however, there was nothing approaching to debauchery in my conduct, and as Manon also behaved with every regard for propriety, the quietness of our life served to recall me gradually to a sense of duty.

* Before the Revolution, the collection of various branches of the public revenues of France was entrusted to individual speculators, known as Farmers-General (*Fermiers Généraux*) to whom the Government *farmed out* the right of levying certain taxes, such as those on salt, tobacco, etc. The people were scandalously mulcted and oppressed by the majority of these men, who built up enormous fortunes by the spoliation of their unhappy victims, who were left virtually without redress. The shameful methods by which these ill-gotten gains were acquired, and the notorious debauchery and profligacy in which they were squandered, made the Farmers-General objects of popular hatred and indignation, which wreaked itself upon them without mercy when the Revolution brought about the day of reckoning.—TRANSLATOR.

I resolved, if possible, to effect a reconciliation with my father. My mistress was so lovable that I had no doubt of her being able to win his favor, if I could but find a way of making her modesty and her many other merits known to him. In a word, I was sanguine enough to believe that I could obtain his consent to my marrying her, having by this time been disabused of any hopes I had once entertained of doing so without his approval.

I communicated this project to Manon, and impressed upon her that not only did considerations of duty and affection dictate my taking this step, but that it was almost a matter of necessity for us, as our funds were seriously diminished, and I was beginning to realize that they were far from being as inexhaustible as I had supposed. Manon received the proposition coldly. However, as she based her objections to it only upon the ground of her love for me, and her fear of my being lost to her should my father disapprove of our plans after he had learnt our place of retreat, I was left without the faintest suspicion of the cruel blow that was about to be inflicted upon me. To the plea of necessity she replied that we still had enough to support us for a few weeks longer, and that after that she would have recourse to the kindness of some relations in the country, to whom she would write. She softened her refusal by caresses so tender and so impassioned, that I, whose life was wrapped up in her and who had not the slightest misgivings as to her loyalty, applauded alike her arguments and her intentions.

I had left in her hands the disposal of our money and the care of defraying our ordinary expenses. I soon began to observe that our daily fare was becoming more luxurious, and that she had indulged herself in some costly adornments of dress. As I was well aware that we could not have more than twelve or fifteen *pistoles* remaining,

at the very most, I expressed my surprise to her at this apparent augmentation of our wealth. She laughingly begged me to give myself no uneasiness on that score. "Did I not promise you," she said, "that I would find some resources?" I loved her too confidingly to be quick to take alarm.

One day, having occasion to go out during the afternoon, I told her before I went that I expected to be away longer than usual. On my return I was surprised to be kept waiting two or three minutes at the door. Our only servant was a young girl of nearly our own age. When



she came to let me in, I asked her why she had delayed so long. She replied, with evident embarrassment, that she had not heard me knock.

"I knocked only once," I said to her, "so, if you did not hear me, what made you come to the door?"

This question so disconcerted her that, not having presence of mind enough to think of a plausible answer, she burst into tears, assuring me at the same time that it was not her fault, as her mistress had forbidden her to open the door until Monsieur de B—— had gone out by the back stairway which led from the dressing-room. I was so stunned by this intelligence that all my strength

deserted me, and, feeling utterly unable to enter our apartment until I had recovered myself, I determined to leave the house again under the pretext of having some further business to attend to. I accordingly ordered the girl to inform her mistress that I should return in a few minutes, but not to mention that she had told me anything about Monsieur de B——.

I was so completely overcome that, as I made my way down-stairs, I could not restrain my tears, though as yet I scarcely knew from what feeling they arose. I went into the nearest *café*, and there, seating myself at a table



and burying my face in my hands, I tried to unravel the chaos of emotions which were surging in my heart. I dared not recall what I had just heard, but sought to cheat myself into believing it all a dream. More than once I was on the point of going back to our lodgings and acting as though I knew nothing of the occurrence. It seemed to me so impossible that Manon could have been unfaithful to me, that I feared to wrong her even by a suspicion. I adored her—that was certain; I had given her no greater proofs of my love than I had received of hers; why, then, should I accuse her of being less sincere and constant than myself? What reason could she have had

for deceiving me? But three hours ago she had lavished her tenderest caresses upon me, and had welcomed mine with rapturous delight. I knew my own heart no better than I knew hers. “No! No!” I said again; “Manon cannot be false; it is impossible! She knows too well that I live only for her—that I worship her; these, surely, cannot be reasons for depriving me of her love!”

Argue as I would, however, I could not stifle my uneasiness at Monsieur de B——’s visit and his stealthy departure. I called to mind, also, Manon’s little purchases, which seemed to me beyond our present means. They



were certainly suggestive of the liberality of a new lover. And then, again, the confident manner in which she had alluded to resources which were unknown to me? I found it difficult to interpret all these enigmas in as favorable a sense as my heart desired.

On the other hand, I considered that she had scarcely been out of my sight since we had come to Paris. In all our occupations, our walks, and our amusements, we were invariably together. Great Heavens! a moment’s separation would have been an intolerable affliction for us. It had become a necessity of our lives to be constantly interchanging assurances of our mutual love; to forego

that sweet privilege would have been torture to us. I could thus conceive of scarcely a moment during which any one but myself could have been in Manon's thoughts.

At last I flattered myself that I had found the solution of the mystery. "Monsieur de B——," I said to myself, "is a man who does an extensive business and has widespread connections. Manon's relations have doubtless remitted some money to her through him. She has probably already received some from him, and he came to-day to bring her more. No doubt she has taken innocent amusement in concealing it from me in order to give me a pleasant surprise. Perhaps she would have told me all about it had I gone in as usual instead of coming here to torture myself; at all events, she will not keep me in the dark any longer when I mention the matter to her."

I fortified myself so resolutely with this view of the affair that it served sensibly to diminish my distress. Returning home at once, I embraced Manon with my accustomed tenderness. She received me affectionately. At first I was tempted to reveal my conjectures to her, feeling more certain than ever that they were correct; but I restrained myself, in the hope that she might anticipate me by telling me of her own accord all that had occurred.

When supper was served, I sat down to the table with an air of great gayety; but, by the light of the candle which was placed between us, I detected, as I imagined, an expression of sadness in the face and eyes of my dear mistress. This thought inspired me, too, with melancholy. I observed that there was something unusual in the manner in which she looked at me. Whether to think it love or pity, I scarcely knew; but the sentiment, whatever it was, seemed to me a tender and wistful one.

I gazed at her with equal intentness; and, perhaps, she was no less at a loss to divine from my face what were

the feelings in my heart. It never occurred to us either to speak or to eat. At last I saw her eyes fill with tears—false, perfidious tears!

“Great Heavens!” I cried, “you are weeping, dearest Manon—yes, weeping! and yet you have not confided to me one word of the grief which thus moves you to tears!”

Her only answer was a sigh, which added to my distress. I arose from my seat, trembling with emotion, and besought her, with all the vehemence of love, to tell me why she wept. Tears coursed each other down my own



cheeks as I wiped away those that fell from her eyes. I was more dead than alive, and in an agony of grief and anxiety which it would have touched the heart of a barbarian to behold.

While thus preoccupied with her I heard the sound of several footsteps on the stairs. Some one tapped softly at the door. Manon gave me a kiss, and, disengaging herself from my embrace, hurried into the dressing-room, quickly closing the door after her. Merely supposing that, as her toilet was somewhat disarranged, she wished to avoid being seen by the strangers who had knocked, I went to the door myself.

Scarcely had I thrown it open when I found myself

seized by three men, whom I recognized as servants of my father's. They offered me no violence ; but, two of them having grasped me by the arms, the third searched my pockets, from which he took a small knife—the only weapon I had about me. They begged me to pardon them for the necessity they were under of treating me so disrespectfully, and told me frankly that they were acting by my father's orders, and that my eldest brother was waiting for me in a coach below.

My astonishment and agitation were so great that I

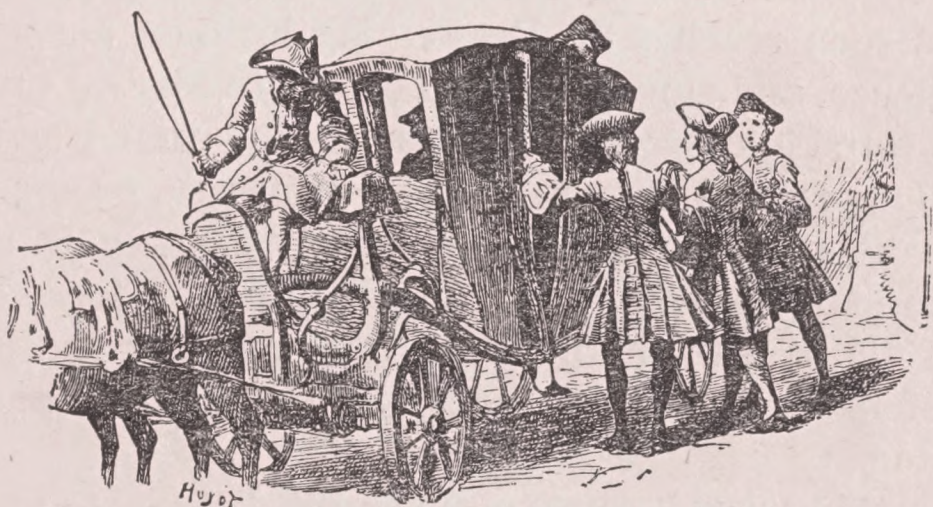


suffered myself to be led away without attempting to resist or to reply. My brother was awaiting me, as they had said. They put me into the coach beside him, and the coachman, who had received his orders, drove us rapidly toward St. Denis. My brother embraced me affectionately, but did not speak to me ; so that I had all the leisure I required to ponder over my misfortune.

It seemed to me, at first, so wrapped in obscurity that I could not see my way even to a plausible conjecture to account for it. I had been cruelly betrayed—but by whom ? Tiberge was the first person who occurred to my mind. “Traitor !” I exclaimed to myself, “your life shall answer for this, if my suspicions prove correct !” However,

I reflected that he did not know where I had been living, and that consequently they could not have obtained the information from *him*.

As for accusing Manon, my heart refused to be guilty of such a suspicion. The unaccountable sadness under which I had seen her laboring, her tears, the tender kiss which she had given me as she withdrew, all these, indeed, were enigmas which I found it hard to unriddle; but my impulse was to interpret them as arising from a presentiment of our common misfortune; and, in the



midst of my despair at the untoward event which had torn me from her side, I had the credulity to imagine that she was even more to be pitied than myself.

The result of my meditations was the conviction that I had been seen in the streets of Paris by some acquaintance who had informed my father of the fact. This thought consoled me. I reckoned upon escaping with no worse consequences than a severe upbraiding, or, possibly, some disagreeable punishment for my rebellion against the paternal authority. I resolved to endure them patiently, and to promise whatever might be required of me, in order to facilitate my speedy return to Paris, so that I could restore life and happiness to my beloved Manon.

CHAPTER IV.

WE soon reached St. Denis. My brother, surprised at my silence, and supposing it to be due to fear on my part, endeavored to console me by assuring me that I had nothing to apprehend from my father's severity, provided that I was disposed to return submissively to the path of duty and to show myself worthy of his affection for me. He made me pass the night at St. Denis, taking the precaution of having the three lackeys sleep in the same room with me.

One thing was a cause of no slight distress to me; and this was to find myself in the same hostelry at which I had stopped with Manon on our way from Amiens to Paris. The landlord and servants recognized me, and at once divined the truth of my story. I overheard the landlord saying:

“Ah! That is the fine young gentleman who passed this way, some six weeks hence, with the lass whom he loved so dearly—as well he might, for a pretty lass she was! Poor youngsters. How they fondled one another! Egad! 'Tis a pity to have separated them!”

I pretended to hear nothing, and showed myself as little as possible.

My brother had a double chaise ready at St. Denis, and

in this we set off early in the morning, arriving home the following evening. He saw my father before I did, in order to predispose him in my favor by telling him how unresistingly I had allowed myself to be brought home; the result being that I was received with less severity than I had looked for. My father contented himself with rebuking me in a general way for the breach of duty of which I had been guilty in absenting myself without his permission. As far as my mistress was concerned, he told me that I had richly merited what had just happened to me for my folly in abandoning myself to a woman of



whom I knew absolutely nothing; that he had entertained a better opinion of my prudence, but that he was in hopes that this little adventure would teach me greater wisdom.

I received these admonitions only in the sense which accorded with my own ideas. I thanked my father for his kindness in pardoning me, and I promised him to conduct myself in future with more obedience and propriety. In my secret heart I was full of exultation; for, from the course which things were taking, I felt little doubt but that I should find a chance to slip away from home, even before the night had passed.

We sat down to supper, and I was rallied on my conquest at Amiens and my flight with that constant mis-

tress of mine. I submitted to this banter with good grace. I was even delighted at being permitted to talk of the subject which occupied my thoughts unceasingly. But a casual remark of my father's suddenly riveted my attention. He made some allusion to perfidy, and to the far from disinterested services rendered him by M. de B——. I was thunderstruck on hearing him utter this name, and begged him humbly to explain himself more fully. He turned to my brother and asked him if he had not told me the whole story. My brother replied that I had seemed to him so little disturbed in mind dur-



ing our journey that he had not considered me in need of that remedy to cure me of my folly. Observing that my father was hesitating whether or not to complete his explanations, I implored him so earnestly to do so, that he satisfied me—or, rather, he tortured me cruelly by the relation of the following abominable story.

To begin with, he asked me whether I had throughout been simple enough to suppose that my mistress loved me. I told him unflinchingly that I was so sure of it that nothing could excite in me the least distrust on that point. “Ha! ha! ha!” he exclaimed, laughing heartily; “this is excellent! You are a pretty dupe! Your fine senti-

ments are vastly to your credit, on my word ! 'Twill be a great pity, my poor Chevalier, to force you to join the Order of Malta, since you are so well fitted to make a husband of patient and accommodating disposition." He indulged in a long succession of similar sneers at what he called my folly and credulity.

At last, seeing that I remained silent, he went on to say that, according to the closest calculation he could make of the time since my departure from Amiens, Manon had loved me for about twelve days ; " for," added he, " you left Amiens, as I reckon, on the 28th of last month ; we are now at the 29th of the present month ; it is eleven



days since Monsieur de B—— wrote to me. I will suppose that eight days were necessary for him to establish a close intimacy with your mistress. Thus, subtracting eleven and eight from the thirty-one days which there are between the 28th of one month and the 29th of the next, there remain twelve, or a fraction more or less ! ”

At this there were renewed peals of laughter. I listened with a pang of such acute agony at my heart that I began to fear it would overmaster me before this sad comedy were at an end.

“ You must know, then,” resumed my father, “ as you do not seem to be aware of it, that Monsieur de B—— has won the heart of your *inamorata*, for he is simply trifling

with me in pretending that his motive in taking her from you was a disinterested desire to serve me. It is scarcely from a man of his stamp that one looks for such lofty sentiments, especially when, as it happens, he is a complete stranger to me. He learned from her that you were my son, and, wishing to rid himself of your inconvenient presence, he wrote and informed me of your whereabouts and of the life of irregularity you were leading, giving me to understand, at the same time, that forcible means would be necessary to secure you. He offered his assistance in finding an easy way to lay hands on you ; and it was under



his directions, and those of your mistress herself, that your brother succeeded in catching you at a moment when you were off your guard. *Now* let us hear you congratulate yourself on the duration of your triumph as a lover ! You know how to vanquish rapidly enough, Chevalier, but not how to maintain your conquests.”

I could listen no longer to words like these, every one of which had pierced me to the heart. Rising from the table, I endeavored to leave the room, but I had scarcely taken four steps when I fell to the floor in a deep swoon. Prompt assistance was rendered me and brought me back to consciousness, but I opened my eyes only to burst into a tor-

rent of tears, and my lips only to give utterance to the most piteous and heart-rending moans.

My father, who always loved me tenderly, devoted himself with all the force of his affection to the task of consoling me. I listened to him, but his words fell meaningless on my ears. Throwing myself at his feet, I clasped my hands in entreaty, and besought him to let me return to Paris that I might seek out B—— and revenge myself on him at the point of the sword.

“No, no!” I cried; “he has not won Manon’s heart! He has used violence toward her; he has seduced her by



some unholy charm or drug—aye, even, perchance, brutally violated her! Manon loves me; ah! do I not know it well? He must have menaced her, dagger in hand, to force her to desert me. What is there that he would *not* have done to tear so sweet a mistress from my arms? Can it be possible, just Heaven! that Manon has betrayed—has ceased to love me?”

As I repeatedly declared my intention of returning to Paris forthwith, and started to my feet again and again with that purpose in view, my father became convinced that, as long as my present transports of grief continued, nothing that he could say would have any effect in pre-

venting me. He therefore made me follow him to a room in the upper part of the house, where he left me in charge of two servants, whom he ordered not to let me out of their sight.

I was in a state of mind bordering upon frenzy. Gladly would I have given my life a thousand times over in exchange for one short quarter of an hour in Paris ; but I realized that, after having declared my intentions so openly, I should not readily be permitted to escape from my room.

I looked out of the windows, and calculated their height from the ground. Seeing no possibility of regaining my liberty in that way, I appealed to the two servants in my most persuasive tones, promising—nay, vowing solemnly to make their fortunes some day, if they would connive at my escape. I entreated, I wheedled, I threatened them—but this attempt was as vain as the other. At last, losing all hope, I resolved to die, and threw myself upon the bed with the determination that I would never leave it alive. I spent that night and the following day in this condition. I refused the food that was brought me the next day. My father came to see me in the afternoon. He was good enough to soothe my sufferings by consolations of the gentlest kind. He commanded me so imperatively to take some food that I yielded, out of respect to his orders.

Several days went by, during which I ate nothing save in his presence and in obedience to his wishes. He continued to press upon my consideration every argument calculated to recall me to my senses and to inspire me with contempt for my faithless Manon. I certainly had lost all esteem for her ; what esteem could I retain for the most fickle and perfidious of beings ? But her image—the fair features which I bore imprinted on my inmost heart.

were not yet effaced. My own feelings were clear to me. "I may die," I said; "I ought to die, in truth, after so much shame and anguish; but, though I suffered a thousand deaths, I should still be unable to forget you, ungrateful Manon!"

My father was surprised to see me continue thus deeply affected. He knew that I cherished principles of honor, and, being certain that Manon's treachery must have made me despise her, he arrived at the conclusion that my constancy was due less to my passion for her in particular than to a general fondness for women. He became so



wedded to this view that, consulting only his tender affection for me, he came one day and broached it to me. "Chevalier," he said to me, "it has hitherto been my intention that you should wear the Cross of the Order of Malta, but I see that your inclinations do not lie in that direction. You have a taste for pretty women. Well, I am willing to find you a wife to your liking. Tell me frankly your ideas on the subject."

I answered him that all women were alike to me now, and that after the blow that had so lately fallen on me, I regarded them all with equal detestation.

"I will find you one," replied my father, with a smile,

“who shall be like your Manon in all respects, save her inconstancy.”

“Ah, sir!” said I, “as you love me, give me her, and her alone! Rest assured, dear father, that it was not she who betrayed me; she is incapable of such base and cruel treachery. It is that false-hearted B—— who is deceiving us—deceiving us all three. If you could but realize the tenderness and sincerity of her nature—if you could but know her—you would yourself love her!”

“Child!” retorted my father, “how can you thus blind yourself, after all that I have told you of her? It was she—she herself who gave you up into your brother’s hands. It were well for you to forget her very name, and, if you are wise, to profit by the indulgence I am showing you.”

I recognized only too clearly that he was right; and it was unreasoning impulse alone that made me thus side with my faithless mistress.

“Alas!” I rejoined, after a moment’s silence, “it is but too true that I am the victim of the most shameful treachery! Yes,” I continued, weeping from very mortification, “yes, I am indeed nothing but a child—I see it plainly. It was an easy matter for them to cheat credulity like mine. But I know how to be revenged!”

My father inquired what I intended to do.

“I will go to Paris,” said I, “and set fire to B——’s house, that he and my faithless Manon may perish together in the flames!”

This outburst made my father laugh, and only resulted in my being watched with increased vigilance in my place of confinement.

I there spent six whole months, during the first of which there was little change in my condition. My feelings may be summed up as a perpetual alternation between love and hatred, between hope and despair, ac-

according to the aspect under which Manon presented herself to my mind. At one moment I thought of her only as the loveliest of women, and pined to see her once more; at another I saw in her nothing but a heartless and unfaithful mistress, and registered vow upon vow that I would seek her out only to punish her.

I was furnished with books, and they served to restore my peace of mind to some degree. I read once more through all my favorite authors, and extended my attainments into fresh branches of learning. My eager delight in study was reawakened in me; and you will see of what



use it proved to me in the sequel. The new insight which I owed to love illuminated for me a number of passages in Horace and Virgil which had formerly been obscure to me. I composed an *Amatory Commentary* on the fourth book of the *Æneid*. I intend that it shall see the light some day, and I am not without hopes that it will be favorably received by the public.

“Alas!” I would sigh, while writing it, “it was for such a heart as mine that the constant Dido longed in vain!”

Tiberge came to see me one day while I was still in confinement. I was surprised at the affectionate warmth with which he greeted me; for I had not hitherto re-

ceived any proofs of his regard for me that could lead me to think of it as anything more than an ordinary college friendship, such as naturally grows up between young fellows of about the same age. He had changed so greatly, and become so matured during the five or six months since I had last seen him, that his whole bearing and tone of conversation inspired me with respect. He talked to me more like a grave and prudent adviser than a companion of my school-days—deploring the follies into which I had strayed, and congratulating me upon my reformation, which he supposed to be almost complete.



Finally he exhorted me to profit by this youthful error of mine by letting it open my eyes to the vanity of pleasure.

I gazed at him in amazement. Observing this, he said to me :

“ My dear Chevalier, what I am now saying is simply the absolute truth, of which I have become firmly convinced after the most earnest examination. I had as great a leaning as yourself towards the pleasures of the senses ; but Heaven vouchsafed me at the same time a love of virtue. I employed my reason in a comparison of the fruits of the one with those of the other, and I was not long in discovering the contrast between them. Religion brought

its aid to my own reflections, and I conceived for this world a deep and unspeakable contempt. Can you divine," he added, "what it is that still keeps me in it, and prevents my seeking a life of solitude? It is solely my warm attachment to you. I know your excellent qualities of heart and mind. There is no goodness of which you might not make yourself capable. The fatal fascinations of pleasure have led you astray. How grievous a loss to the cause of virtue! Your flight from Amiens distressed me so deeply that I have not since enjoyed a mo-



ment's happiness. You may judge of this by the steps it led me to take."

He then told me how, on realizing that I had deceived him and fled with my mistress, he had set out on horseback in my pursuit; but, as I had the start of him by some four or five hours, it had been impossible for him to overtake me. He had reached St. Denis, however, only half an hour after I had left it. Being sure that I would remain in Paris, he had spent six weeks there in a vain endeavor to find me. He had gone to every place where he thought it likely that he might meet me, and, at last, had recognized my mistress one evening at the theatre, where the splendor of her toilet convinced him that she presented this

prosperous appearance at the expense of some new lover. He had followed her coach home, and learned from a servant that she was living upon the liberality of M. B——.

“I did not stop at this,” he continued, “but returned to the house the next day, to ascertain from her own lips what had become of you. She left me abruptly when I mentioned your name, and I was compelled to return to the country without any further enlightenment. There I heard all about your adventure, and the profound distress which it had caused you, but I thought it as well not to see you until I was assured of finding you more resigned.”

“And you have seen Manon, then,” I responded, with a sigh. “Alas! you are more fortunate than I, who am doomed never to behold her again!”

He reproached me for my sigh, which betrayed a lingering weakness for her; and then flattered me so adroitly on the goodness of my character and general disposition that, even during this first visit, he succeeded in inspiring me with an ardent desire to renounce, like him, all worldly pleasures, and to enter the Church.

I was so enamoured of this idea that, when once more left to myself, I thought of nothing else. I recurred in memory to the words of the Bishop of Amiens, who had given me the same advice, and to the bright augury which he had drawn of my success, should I decide to embrace that calling. Piety, too, was not without its share in influencing me. “I will lead,” thought I, “a holy and Christian life. I will devote myself to study and to religion, which will leave me no time to think of love and its dangerous pleasures. I will hold in contempt all that is admired by the common herd of mankind; and, since I feel an inward assurance that my heart will desire nothing but what is worthy of its esteem, I shall have but few wishes, and as few cares.”

I thereupon sketched, in anticipation, a plan of peaceful and solitary life. In my fancy I saw a secluded cottage nestling among surrounding trees; a brook of gently flowing water, murmuring as it ran by the end of my garden; a library of chosen volumes; a small circle of virtuous and intelligent friends; and a daintily served table, over which temperance and frugality should reign. To all this I added a correspondence with some friend residing in Paris, who should keep me informed in the news of the day—less to gratify my curiosity than to supply me with a source of diversion in the contemplation of the



senseless turmoil of mankind. “Will not this be true happiness?” I exclaimed, “and shall I not find in such a life the fulfilment of all my best dreams?”

The project undeniably presented many attractions to a disposition like mine. But, when my virtuous scheme was all complete, I felt that there was still something more that my heart demanded; and that for the most inviting of retreats to leave nothing to be desired, it must be shared with Manon.

However, as Tiberge continued to visit me frequently in furtherance of the purpose with which he had inspired me, I took occasion to broach the subject to my father.

He assured me that it was his intention to leave his children free in the choice of their vocation, and that, whatever disposition of my future I might wish to make, he merely reserved to himself the right of aiding me by his advice. He then gave me some that was full of wisdom, and that tended less to discourage me in my project than to enable me to follow it out with a due appreciation of the step I was taking.

CHAPTER V

THE commencement of the scholastic year was close at hand, and I agreed with Tiberge that we should enter the Seminary of St. Sulpice together—he to complete his theological studies, and I to begin mine. His merits, which were well known to the Bishop of the Diocese, obtained



for him a living of considerable value from that prelate, previous to our departure.

My father, believing me to be quite cured of my passion, made no difficulty about letting me go. We duly arrived at Paris, where the ecclesiastical garb took the place of the Cross of Malta, and the title of the Abbé des Grioux that of Chevalier. I gave myself up to study with such application that I made remarkable progress within a few months. I devoted a portion of the night to it, and lost not a moment of the day. I gained so brilliant a reputa-

tion, that I was already congratulated upon the honors which it was thought I was sure of obtaining, and, without my having solicited it, my name was entered on the list for a vacant benefice. Nor was piety neglected; I was full of fervor in my attention to all religious exercises.

Tiberge was overjoyed at what he regarded as his own work, and I more than once saw him shedding tears of pure delight as he proudly contemplated what he called my conversion.

That human resolutions should be liable to change has



never been a matter of astonishment to me; they are born of one passion—another passion may destroy them; but when I reflect on the sacred nature of those which had led me to St. Sulpice, and on the inward joy which Heaven allowed me to taste in carrying them out, I am appalled at the ease with which I was able to break them.

If it be true that divine aid at all times supplies a strength equal to that of the passions, then let it be explained to me by what fatal ascendancy one finds one's self suddenly swept far from the path of duty without feeling one's self capable of the least resistance and without being conscious of the least remorse? I believed myself to be completely delivered from the frailties of love. It seemed to me that

I would have preferred the perusal of a page of St. Augustine, or a quarter of an hour of Christian meditation, to all the pleasures of the senses ; without excepting those which could have been offered me by Manon. Yet one unhappy moment hurled me again over the precipice ; and my downfall was all the more irreparable that, finding myself all at once at a depth as profound as that from which I had risen, the new disorders into which I plunged dragged me still further toward the bottom of the abyss.

I had passed nearly a year in Paris without making any inquiries as to the doings of Manon. It had cost me a se-



vere struggle at first to do this violence to my feelings ; but the ever-present counsels of Tiberge, and my own reflections, had enabled me to gain the victory over myself. The last few months had glided by so tranquilly that I believed myself to be on the point of forgetting forever that lovely but perfidious being. The time arrived when I had publicly to maintain a thesis in the School of Theology. I extended invitations to several persons of distinction to honor me by their presence. My name was thus spread abroad in all quarters of Paris ; it reached the ears of my faithless mistress. She did not feel certain in her recognition of it, under the title of Abbé ; but a lingering

curiosity, or, perhaps, some sense of penitence at having betrayed me (which of the two sentiments I have never been able to determine), excited her interest in a name so like mine; and she came to the Sorbonne with some other ladies. She was present during my presentation of my thesis, and doubtless had little difficulty in recognizing me.

I was entirely unconscious of her presence, for, in these places, as you know, there are private boxes reserved for ladies, in which they are hidden from view behind lattice-work screens. I returned to St. Sulpice, covered with glory and overwhelmed with compliments. It was then six o'clock in the evening. A few minutes after my return, I was informed that a lady desired to see me. I proceeded at once to the parlor, little suspecting the startling apparition that there awaited me. Manon! It was she—but more radiantly beautiful than I had ever seen her. She was in her eighteenth year, and words fail me to describe her loveliness. There was a delicate grace, a sweetness, a fascination about her which might have been envied by the Goddess of Love herself. To my eyes she seemed a vision of enchantment.

I was so overcome with emotion at seeing her that I could not utter a word; and, unable to conjecture what the object of her visit could be, I stood trembling and with my eyes cast down, awaiting her explanation. For some minutes her embarrassment was as great as my own, but at last, finding that I did not break the silence, she covered her face with her hands to hide the tears which were beginning to fall from her eyes, and, in a timid voice, said that she knew she deserved my hatred for her unfaithfulness, but that if I had ever really loved her, I had been very cruel to allow two years to go by without making any effort to let her know what had become of me, and

that it was still more cruel not to have a word to say to her now that I saw her standing before me in such deep distress.

I cannot describe the tumult of feelings in my heart as I listened to her.

She sat down. I remained standing, half turned towards her, but not daring to trust myself to look her full in the face. More than once I began a reply, but my strength failed me before I could complete it, and the words died



away upon my lips. At last, by a supreme effort, I cried in a tone of anguish :

“Manon ! Manon ! False and heartless girl !”

Weeping bitterly, she told me once more that she had no intention of justifying her perfidious conduct.

“Then, what *is* your intention ?” I cried.

“To die !” was her response ; “unless you give me back your heart, for without it I cannot live !”

“Then ask my life, faithless girl !” I said, giving way at last to the tears which I had been vainly striving to restrain ; “ask me for my life, which is the only thing left me to sacrifice to you ; as for my heart, it has never ceased to be yours.”

Scarcely had I uttered these last words when she sprang from her seat in a transport of joy, and ran to embrace me. She overwhelmed me with passionate caresses, and called me by all the fond names which love invents for the expression of its tenderest emotions.

I responded but languidly at first. The transition from my recent condition of mental tranquillity to the tumultuous emotions which I now felt reviving in my breast was so great and so sudden that it positively appalled me. I shuddered like a man who finds himself benighted in the midst of some solitary plain ; everything around him



seems to belong to a strange and unfamiliar order of things ; he is seized with a nameless horror, and regains his composure only after a prolonged examination of all his surroundings.

We seated ourselves side by side, and I took her hands in mine.

“ Ah, Manon ! ” said I, gazing at her sadly ; “ little did I foresee the base treachery with which you have repaid my love ! It was an easy thing for you to deceive a heart over which you reigned in absolute sovereignty, and which found all its happiness in obeying you and gratifying your every wish. Tell me, have you found any other so tender

and so devoted? No, no! Nature casts but few in the same mould as mine! But tell me this, at least; have you ever thought of that loving heart with regret? How far am I to rely on this revival of affection which has brought you back to-day to console it? You are more beautiful than ever—that I see only too well; but, in the name of all the pangs I have suffered for your sake, tell me, Manon, my lovely girl, whether you will be more constant also?"

She replied with such pathetic expressions of her penitence, and pledged herself to constancy by such earnest vows and protestations, that I was moved beyond all words.



"Dearest Manon," I said to her, with a profane mingling of the phrases of love and of theology, "you are a divinity; no created being could inspire such adoration as I feel for you! My heart is swelling with triumph and beatitude. Let them talk of free-will as they please at St. Sulpice, 'tis but a chimera! I am going to sacrifice fortune and reputation for your sake; I foresee it plainly; I read my destiny in your bright eyes; but where is the sacrifice for which your love would not richly compensate me? I care nothing for the favors of fortune; glory seems to me but an idle vapor; all my projects of a life devoted to the service of the Church were vain imagin-

ings. All joys, in short, save those which I hope to taste with you, are unworthy of a thought, since they could not hold their own in my heart for a single moment against one glance from you ! ”

While I promised to bury all her past faults in oblivion, I could not resist the desire to know how it was that she had yielded to the seductions of B——. She told me that he had caught sight of her at her window, and, becoming deeply enamoured of her, had declared his passion in a business-like manner, eminently characteristic of a farmer-general ; that is to say, by sending her a letter in which he informed her that payment would be made in proportion to favors received. She had coquetted with him at first, but only in the hope of getting money enough from him to enable us to live in comfort. He had dazzled her by such magnificent promises, however, that her constancy had been gradually undermined ; yet I might judge how great her compunction had been, she said, by the grief she had betrayed to me on the eve of our separation. In spite of the luxury in which he had maintained her, she had never been happy with him ; not only because she found him lacking in the delicacy of feeling and amiability of manner which characterized me, but also because, even in the midst of the pleasures which he continually provided for her, her inmost heart was filled with the memory of my love and with remorse for her own infidelity. She spoke of Tiberge, and of the deep confusion into which his visit had thrown her. “ Had a sword pierced my heart,” added she, “ the pang would have been less keen than the one I felt. I turned my back upon him, finding myself unable to bear his presence for even a moment.”

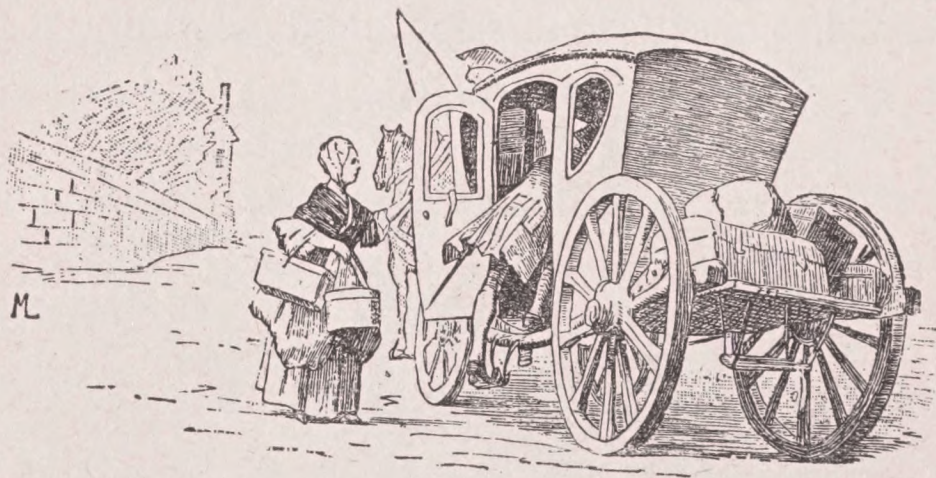
She then went on to relate how she had learned of my residence in Paris, of my change of profession, and

of my examination at the Sorbonne. So great had been her agitation, she assured me, during the disputation of my thesis, that she had found it difficult not merely to refrain from tears, but from giving vent to the moans and cries which had more than once been on the point of breaking from her lips. Finally, she told me that in order to hide her emotion she had been the last to leave the hall; and that then, consulting only the impulse of her heart, she had yielded to her impetuous longing, and had come straight to the Seminary, with the resolution of there putting an end to her life unless she found me willing to forgive



her. Where is the barbarian who would not have been moved by a penitence so deep and touching as this? As for myself, I felt at that moment that I would have sacrificed all the bishoprics in Christendom for Manon's sake. I asked her what new arrangement of our affairs she proposed that we should adopt. She replied that our first concern must be to escape from the Seminary, and that we must postpone all deliberation as to our further movements until we had reached a place of greater safety. I yielded without demur to all her wishes. She stepped into her coach and drove off to await me at the corner of the street. I slipped out a few moments after, successfully eluding

the vigilance of the porter at the door, and sprang into the coach beside her. We drove to a clothier's shop in the *Fripperie*,* where I donned once more a laced coat and sword. Manon paid for them, as I had not a penny about me, and, in her fear lest I might encounter some obstacle to my flight from St. Sulpice, she had opposed my returning to my room for a moment to get my money. My purse, moreover, was but scantily filled, and the munificence of B—— had made her rich enough to despise



the small sum which she had persuaded me to leave behind.

Before we left the clothier's shop we held a consultation as to the course we should pursue. With a view of enhancing in my eyes the completeness of her sacrifice of B—— for my sake, she determined to act without the least consideration for him.

“I will leave him his furniture,” she said, “for it belongs to him; but I shall take with me, as I am entitled to do, all the jewelry and about sixty thousand francs,

* *La Fripperie* was the neighborhood in old Paris in which were situated the shops of the venders of cheap and second-hand clothing, and corresponded to the “Monmouth Street” of London.—TRANSLATOR.

which I have received from him during the past two years. I have given him no rights over me," she added; "so that we can safely remain in Paris, and take a comfortable house, where we will live happily together."

I reminded her that, though there might be no danger for her in this plan, there would be a great deal for me; as I must inevitably be recognized sooner or later, and would be continually exposed to the recurrence of just such a mishap as had befallen me once already. She frankly owned



that she would be very reluctant to leave Paris, and I was so anxious not to cross her wishes in any respect, that there was no risk which I would not gladly have faced in order to please her. However, we hit upon a sensible compromise, which was to take a house in some village near Paris, from which we could readily reach town when pleasure or business called us there. We decided upon Chaillot, which is within easy distance of Paris.

Manon then hastened to her house, and I proceeded to the smaller gate of the Tuileries Gardens to await her coming. She returned about an hour later, in a hackney-coach, accompanied by a maid-servant, and bringing with her two or three trunks in which were packed her clothes and everything of value which she possessed.

We lost no time in getting to Chaillot, where we put up for the first night at the inn, in order to gain time to look about us for a house, or, at all events, for comfortable lodgings. We found an apartment to our liking the very next day.

CHAPTER VI.

For a time my happiness appeared to be established on the firmest of foundations. Manon was all gentleness and affection. She lavished such tender attentions upon me that I felt myself more than repaid for all the sufferings which I had undergone.

As we had both of us gained some share of practical experience, we prudently discussed the extent of our resources. The sixty thousand francs, which formed the bulk of our little fortune, was not a sum that would last us all our lives; especially as we were not inclined to put over-much restraint upon our expenditure. Economy was not Manon's chief virtue, any more than it was my own.

The arrangement I proposed to myself was as follows: "Sixty thousand francs," as I said to her, "ought to be enough to support us for ten years. Two thousand crowns a year will be as much of an income as we shall need if we continue to live at Chaillot. We will adopt a genteel, but simple mode of life. Our only extravagances shall consist in keeping a coach, and visiting the theatres. We will lay down rules for ourselves. Thus, as you are fond of the Opera, we will go to hear it twice a week. As to cards we will limit ourselves at play so that our losses shall never exceed two *pistoles*.* In the course of ten

* Twenty francs.

years some change must inevitably occur in my family affairs. My father is advanced in years, and may die; in which case I shall come into property which will place us beyond the reach of any further anxiety."

I have been guilty of many worse follies in my life than this arrangement would have been, had we been wise enough to persevere in our strict adherence to it; but our resolutions lasted barely more than a month. Manon was devoted to pleasure: I was devoted to her. Fresh occasions for extravagance were incessantly arising; and—so far from grudging the money which she spent, often with lavish prodigality—I was the first to procure her everything which I thought likely to afford her gratification.

Even our residence at Chaillot soon began to grow irksome to her. Winter was drawing near; every one was returning to town, and the country was commencing to look deserted. She suggested that we should take a house in Paris. To this I refused my consent; but, in order to partially satisfy her, I told her that we might hire furnished apartments in town, where we could spend the night when we chanced to be very late in leaving the Assembly Ball, to which we were in the habit of going three or four times a week; for the inconvenience of returning to Chaillot at so late an hour was the pretext she advanced for her wish to move away from that village. Thus we indulged ourselves in two sets of lodgings: one in town and the other in the country. This change soon threw our affairs into the utmost confusion, by bringing about two occurrences which were fraught with ruinous consequences to us.

Manon had a brother who was an officer of the Royal Guard. By an unlucky coincidence, his lodgings in Paris happened to be in the same street as our own. Seeing

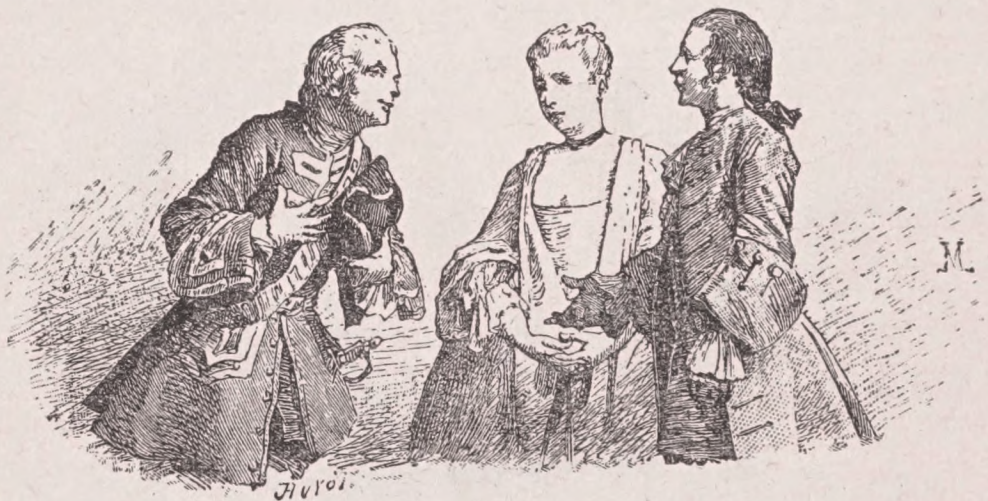
his sister at her window one morning, he recognized her, and at once hurried to our apartment. He was a rough and churlish fellow, devoid of all honorable feeling. He burst into our room, cursing horribly; and, knowing something of his sister's adventures, proceeded to load her with reproaches and abuse. I had gone out a moment before, which was probably a fortunate circumstance for one or the other of us, as an insult was the last thing I was disposed to tolerate.

I did not return home until after he had left, and then



Manon's air of dejection led me to suspect that something unusual had occurred. I drew from her an account of the painful scene through which she had just passed, and of her brother's brutal threats. So unmeasured was my indignation that I should at once have hastened after him to chastise him as he deserved, had she not restrained me by her tearful appeals. While we were talking the matter over, the guardsman re-entered the room in which we were sitting, without waiting to be announced. Had I known who he was, I should not have received him as civilly as I did; but, before I had time to inquire, he had greeted us with an air of cheerful self-assurance, and was rapidly telling Manon that he had come to apologize to her

for his violence. He had, he explained, been under the impression that she was leading a dissolute life, and this idea had aroused his indignation; but, having made inquiries about me from one of our servants, he had received such favorable accounts of me that they had made him desirous of being on good terms with us. Grotesque and offensive as was the recommendation thus obtained from one of my own lackeys, I acknowledged his intended compliment courteously, thinking that it would please Manon for me to do so. She appeared delighted, for her part,



to find that he was willing to effect a reconciliation. We invited him to remain to dinner; and, before many minutes had elapsed, he had placed himself on a footing of such familiarity with us that, hearing us speak of returning to Chaillot, he insisted on accompanying us thither. There was nothing for it but to give him a seat in our carriage. This was tantamount, on his part, to entering into possession; for he soon fell into the way of finding so much pleasure in our society, that he made our house his own, and installed himself as virtual master of all that belonged to us.

He called me his brother, and, under the pretext of fraternal intimacy, took upon himself to invite all his friends

to our house and to entertain them there at our expense. He dressed in the most costly style, drawing upon our purse for the means of doing so; and even saddled us with all his debts. Out of consideration for Manon, I closed my eyes to this tyranny, and went so far as to feign ignorance of the fact that every now and again he extorted considerable sums of money from her. It is true that when fortune favored him—for he was an ardent gamester—he was honorable enough to repay her part of what she had lent him. But our means were too limited to meet the demands of



such reckless extravagance for any length of time, and I was on the point of expressing myself very emphatically to him on the subject, in order to rid ourselves of his importunities, when a most unfortunate accident saved me the trouble, by bringing in its train another calamity which impoverished us beyond all recovery.

One night we had slept in Paris, as we were in the habit of doing very frequently. The maid-servant, who, on these occasions, was left alone at Chaillot, came to me in the morning with the intelligence that our house had taken fire during the night, and that the flames had been extinguished with great difficulty. I asked her whether any damage had been done to our furniture. She replied that the crowd of strangers who had come to give assist-

ance had created so much confusion, that she could not answer for the safety of anything. I trembled for our money, which had been left there, locked up in a small chest; and hastened back to Chaillot at once. My promptitude was in vain; the chest had already disappeared!

In that bitter moment I realized that one need be no miser in order to love money. So keen was my anguish at our loss, that I thought it would cost me my reason. I saw at one glance all the new miseries to which I was



about to be exposed. Poverty was the least of them. I understood Manon's nature; I had already learned, only too well, that however faithful and devoted she might be while fortune smiled on me, she could not be trusted in adversity. She loved pleasure and luxury too much to sacrifice them for my sake. "I shall lose her!" I cried to myself. "Unhappy wretch that I am, must I again be robbed of all that I hold dear?"

This thought threw me into such an agony of apprehension that I hesitated for some moments as to whether it would not be best to seek a refuge from all my sorrows in death. I retained enough presence of mind, however, to desire, before I took that fatal step, to satisfy myself

whether there were, indeed, no other resource left open to me, and, as I pondered, Providence mercifully inspired me with an idea which checked my despair. It would not be impossible, I thought, to conceal our loss from Manon; and by my own industry, or some stroke of good fortune, to gain sufficient means to maintain her comfortably and prevent her feeling any sense of want.

“Did I not calculate,” said I, by way of consoling myself, “that twenty thousand crowns would suffice for all our needs for the next ten years? Well, let us suppose that those ten years have gone by, and that none of the changes I had hoped for have occurred in my family; what course should I adopt? I am scarcely prepared to say, it is true; but, what is there to prevent my doing *now* whatever I should do *then*? Are there not many persons now living in Paris who have neither my intelligence nor my natural endowments, and who yet owe their support to their talents, such as they are? Has not Providence,” I continued, as I reflected on the different conditions of life, “ordered things with profound wisdom? The majority of the great and rich are fools—that fact is obvious to every one who knows anything of society. Now, the justice of this is admirable. If, to their riches, they added the possession of intelligence, they would be unduly happy, and the remainder of mankind unduly wretched. To the latter, therefore, are accorded superior physical and mental faculties as means of raising themselves above misery and poverty. Some of them gain a share of the wealth of the higher classes by ministering to their pleasures, and so making them their dupes. Others devote themselves to their instruction, and try to make worthy and upright citizens of them. It is rarely, in truth, that they succeed; but that is not the object contemplated by Divine wisdom. What they *do* succeed in accomplishing

is, to reap the fruit of their labors by living at the expense of those whom they teach. Thus, from whatever point of view one looks at it, the folly of the rich and great forms an excellent source of revenue for humbler folk."

These reflections served to restore me to some degree of cheerfulness and composure. My first resolution was to go and consult M. Lescaut, Manon's brother. He knew Paris thoroughly; and only too many opportunities had been afforded me of observing that it was neither from



his own property nor from the King's pay that he drew the main part of his income. I had barely twenty *pis- toles* left—that amount having luckily been in my pocket. I showed him my purse, and told him of my misfortune and my fears, and then asked him whether, in his opinion, there remained any other alternative for me to choose than to die of starvation, or blow out my brains in despair.

He replied that suicide was the refuge of fools; while, as for starvation, many an able man found himself reduced to it simply because he refused to make proper use of his talents. It lay with me to ascertain what I was capable of doing, but he assured me of his readiness to aid and advise me in whatever I might attempt.

"All this is very vague, M. Lescaut," said I. "The necessities of my case would seem to demand a more immediate remedy; what am I to tell Manon, for instance?"

"You need be under no anxiety about Manon, I should say," was his reply. "With her you have always the means of putting an end to your embarrassments whenever you please. A girl such as she is ought to support us all three."

I was about to rebuke him as he deserved for this insolent suggestion, when he cut me short by going on to



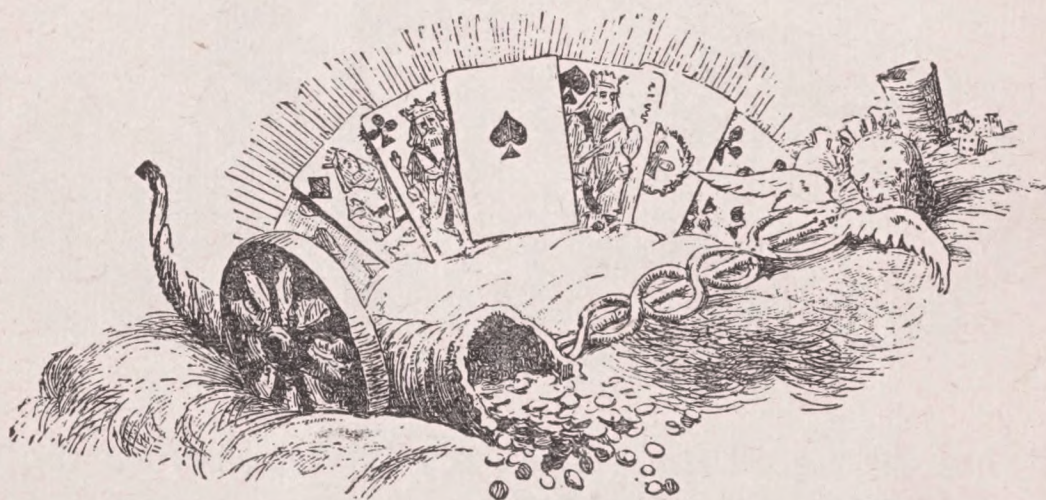
say that he would guarantee my having, before night, a thousand crowns, to be divided between us, if I would consent to be guided by his advice. He knew a nobleman, he continued, who was so liberal in all that concerned his pleasures, that he was sure he would think nothing of paying that amount to secure the favors of a girl like Manon. Here I stopped him.

"I entertained a higher opinion of you than this," I exclaimed. "I was under the impression that your motive in according me your friendship was based upon sentiments entirely opposed to those which you now profess."

He unblushingly avowed that he had been of this way of thinking from the first; and that his sister having

once violated the laws of her sex, though in favor of a man for whom he had the warmest regard, he had become reconciled with her only in the hope of turning her misconduct to some account.

It became very evident to me that we had so far been his dupes. Deep as was my disgust at his words, however, the need in which I stood of his assistance forced me to reply, laughingly, that this proposal of his was a last resource which we must reserve for the direst extremity ; and to beg him to suggest some other course. He advised that I should take advantage of my youth and of the



pleasing presence which nature had bestowed upon me, to form an intrigue with some elderly lady of fortune and liberality.

I did not relish this project any better, involving, as it did, infidelity to Manon ; and I suggested gaming as the easiest and most appropriate expedient for one in my situation. Gaming, he agreed, was certainly a resource ; but it demanded some initiation into its secrets. To undertake to play, simply, with the ordinary chances of success, would be the surest method of completing my ruin ; while to attempt, alone and unaided, to make use of those little devices which are employed by the skilful to correct the

partialities of fortune, was a perilous business. There was, he admitted, a third alternative—that of joining the Fraternity ; but I was so young that he feared the honorable body of Confederates would not consider me as yet possessed of the requisite qualifications for membership of the League.

He promised me, however, to use his good offices with them on my behalf, and—with a generosity of which I did not think him capable—offered to let me have some money, should I find myself in pressing need of it. The only favor I asked of him for the time being was to tell Manon nothing about my loss, nor about the subject of our conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

I WAS, if anything, more ill at ease when I left Lescaut than I had been on going to see him. I even regretted that I had confided my secret to him. He had done nothing for me that I could not have obtained equally well without making the disclosure; and I was in mortal dread lest he should break the promise I had exacted from him of divulging nothing to Manon. I had reason to apprehend, moreover, from the sentiments which he had avowed, that he might decide to turn her to some profit—to use his own expression—by taking her from me, or, at any rate, by advising her to desert me and attach herself to a richer and more fortunate lover.

This led me into a train of reflections which resulted only in torturing my mind and renewing the despair to which I had been a prey that morning. An idea which suggested itself to me more than once, was to write to my father, leading him to believe that I was again penitent and anxious to reform, and so to obtain some pecuniary assistance from him. But I had a very vivid recollection of the fact that, in spite of all his kindness, he had kept me a close prisoner for six months as a punishment for my first offence; and I had little doubt that after such a scandal as must have been caused by my flight from St. Sulpice, he would treat me with much greater severity.

At last, out of the chaos of my thoughts, there arose one which at once set my mind at rest; and I wondered that it had not sooner occurred to me. This was, to appeal to my friend Tiberge, on whose continued affection and sympathy I felt that I could always count. There is no higher tribute to virtue than the confidence with which we always turn to those whom we know to possess integrity of character. We feel that we run no risk; if they are not always in a position to offer us actual assistance, we are sure, at least, of obtaining kindness and consider-



ation at their hands. Our hearts, so carefully closed to the rest of our fellow-men, expand freely in their presence, just as a flower buds forth under the rays of the sun, from which it expects none but kindly and genial influences.

It seemed to me that it was by the interposition of a protecting Providence that I had so opportunely remembered Tiberge. I resolved to find some way of seeing him before the day was ended; and, hastening back to our lodgings, I wrote him a few lines, appointing a suitable place for an interview. I pledged him to silence and discretion, as among the most valuable services he could render me in the existing condition of my affairs.

The prospect of seeing him inspired me with a cheer-

fulness which banished the traces of grief that Manon must otherwise have detected in my face. I alluded to our mishap at Chaillot as a trifle which need cause her no alarm ; and since, of all places in the world, she loved best to be in Paris, she did not disguise her delight when I told her that it would be advisable for us to remain there until some slight damage caused by the fire at Chaillot had been repaired.

An hour afterwards I received an answer from Tiberge, promising to meet me at the place I had named. Full of



impatience, I hastened to the spot. I was conscious, nevertheless, of a certain sense of shame in thus going to face a friend whose very presence could not but be a rebuke to my irregularities. Still, my belief in the largeness of his heart, and my devotion to Manon's interests, served to embolden me.

I had asked him to meet me in the garden of the Palais Royal, and found him awaiting me there. No sooner did he see me than he ran forward to embrace me. For a long time he held me clasped in his arms, and I felt my face moistened by his tears. I told him that it was with feelings of shame and embarrassment that I had sought his presence, and that my heart was filled with a keen

sense of my own ingratitude. “Before all else,” said I, “let me conjure you to tell me whether I may still regard you as my friend, after having so justly merited the loss of your affection and esteem?”

He replied in a tone of the utmost tenderness that nothing could make him renounce that title; that my very misfortunes, and—if I would permit him to say so—the errors and immorality of my conduct, had increased his affection for me; but that it was an affection mingled with the deepest pain—such as we feel for a beloved one whom



we see tottering on the brink of ruin without being able to succor him.

We seated ourselves upon a bench.

“Alas!” I said to him, with a sigh that rose from the bottom of my heart: “Your compassion for me must indeed be measureless, my dear Tiberge, if you can assure me that it is equal to the misery I feel! I blush to lay it bare before you; for I confess that its cause is not altogether a glorious one; but its results are so sad that, even did you love me less than you do, you could not but be moved by them.”

He begged me, as a proof of my friendship, to tell him unreservedly all that had happened to me since my flight from St. Sulpice. I complied, and, so far from deviat-

ing in any respect from the truth, or glossing over my faults with a view to making them appear more excusable, I dwelt upon my passion with all the vehemence with which it inspired me. I described it to him as one of those special fatalities which single out their unhappy victim for inevitable ruin, and against which it is as impossible for Virtue to struggle successfully as it is for Wisdom to foresee their coming.

I drew a vivid picture of my mental agitations, of my fears, and of the despair which had taken possession of me two hours before I saw him ; as well as of that in which I should again be plunged if I were abandoned by my friends as pitilessly as I had been by fortune. In short, I so touched good Tiberge's kind heart, that I saw he was suffering as much out of sympathy with me as I was from the sense of my own troubles.

He embraced me again and again, and exhorted me to take courage and be consoled. As he assumed all the while, however, that I must part from Manon, I gave him distinctly to understand that the very prospect of such a separation was what I regarded as the greatest of my misfortunes ; and that I was prepared to suffer the worst extremes of misery—aye, death in its cruelest form—before I would submit to a remedy more intolerable than all my sorrows combined.

“Let me understand you, then,” he said. “What help can I give you if you rebel against all my proposals ?”

I dared not confess that what I wanted from him was pecuniary aid. He comprehended at last that such was the case, however ; and, after telling me that he thought he saw my meaning, he sat for some time buried in reflection, as though he were carefully weighing his decision.

“Do not imagine,” he resumed before long, “that my hesitation arises from any diminution of the warmth of

my friendship and affection. But to what an alternative do you reduce me, if I must either refuse you the only aid that you will accept, or else violate my sense of duty in granting it to you! For would it not be taking part in your immorality were I to supply you with the means of persisting in it? However," he continued, after a moment's thought, "I suppose it may be that the state of desperation into which poverty has driven you scarcely leaves you free to choose the better course. Calmness of mind is essential for the appreciation of wisdom and



truth. I will find a way of letting you have some money. Allow me, my dear Chevalier," he added, pressing my hand, "to attach only this one condition to my doing so: that you tell me where you are living, and give me leave at any rate to use my best endeavors to bring you back to the path of virtue, which I know you love, and from which you are led astray only by the violence of your passions."

I gave my willing consent to all that he desired, and begged him to commiserate me on the malignity of fate which allowed me to profit so little by the counsels of so virtuous a friend.

He then took me at once to a banker of his acquaintance, who advanced me one hundred *pistoles* on his note

of hand; for Tiberge was anything but well supplied with ready money. I have already said that he was not a rich man. His living brought him in a thousand crowns, but as this was the first year of his incumbency he had not as yet received any of the revenue from it; and it was on his prospective emoluments that he made me this advance.

I appreciated his generosity to the full, and was so deeply affected by it as to deplore the blindness of a fatal love, which forced me to violate all the dictates of duty. For a few brief moments Virtue gathered sufficient



strength in my heart to rebel against the tyranny of my passion; and I realized, at least during that instant of light, the shame and indignity of the fetters by which I was bound. But the struggle was a feeble one, and of short duration. The sight of Manon would have made me fling myself down from heaven itself; and I was amazed to think, when I found myself once more at her side, that I had been capable for one moment of regarding as shameful so justifiable an affection for so lovely an object.

Manon's character was a singular one. Never had a girl less attachment to money than she; yet she could not know a moment's peace when confronted by the fear

of being in want of it. Pleasure and diversion were necessities to her. She would never have cared to possess a penny, if enjoyments could have been obtained without spending one. She did not so much as concern herself to inquire into the extent of our resources, provided she could pass the day agreeably; so that, as she was neither excessively devoted to the card-table, nor capable of being dazzled by the ostentation of gross extravagance, nothing was easier than to satisfy her by providing her day by day with amusements to her taste.

But it was so much a matter of necessity with her to be



thus engrossed in pleasure that there was no counting, without this, upon the turns of her humor and her inclinations. Although she loved me tenderly, and I alone, as she was eager to admit, could make her taste in all their sweetness the delights of love, I was yet almost convinced that her affection would not hold its own in face of apprehensions of a certain kind. She would have preferred me to all the world, as long as I was in possession of a fair fortune; but I had no doubt whatever but that she would desert me for some new B—— should I have nothing left to offer her but constancy and fidelity.

I resolved, therefore, to regulate my personal expenses so carefully that I should always be in a position to sup-

ply the money for hers, and to forego any necessities of my own rather than limit her even in superfluities. The coach gave me more anxiety than anything else, for there did not seem to be any likelihood of our being able to keep the horses and coachman. I confided my uneasiness on this point to M. Lescaut. I had not concealed from him the fact that I had received a hundred *pistoles* from a friend of mine. He told me again that if I felt disposed to try the chances of the gaming-table, he was not without hopes that, by sacrificing with a good grace a hun-



dred francs or so in treating the members of the fraternity, I might, on his recommendation, be admitted into the League of the *Chevaliers d'Industrie*. Repugnant as the idea of cheating was to me, I suffered myself to be overruled by cruel necessity.

M. Lescaut introduced me that very evening as a relative of his own. He added that I was the more eager to succeed from the fact that I stood in need of the greatest favors Dame Fortune could bestow. In order to show them, however, that my straits were not those of a pauper, he told them that it was my intention to treat them to supper.

The offer was accepted, and I regaled them in princely

style. For some time they talked of nothing but my advantages of person and of manner. It was generally agreed that there was every promise of my success, as there was something about my face and air that savored of the man of honor, and that would prevent any one's suspecting me of unfair play. Finally, they expressed their thanks to M. Lescaut for having made the acquisition of a novice of my merits for the Order, and appointed one of the *Chevaliers* to devote several days to giving me the requisite instructions.

The principal theatre of my exploits was to be the *Hôtel de Transylvanie*, where there was a faro table in one saloon, and various other games of cards or of dice in the gallery.* This gaming-house was kept for the

* For a full appreciation of these allusions to gaming and its customs at the time in which the story of "Manon Lescaut" is laid, the reader must have some acquaintance with the peculiar state of society then existing, and the open toleration during the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. of gambling-houses from which many of the nobility and, in some cases, the Government itself, drew considerable revenues. The following quotations from Robert Houdin's remarkable book, "The Tricks of the Greeks Unveiled," may not be inappropriate in this connection :

"The most powerful cause of the increasing numbers of sharpers in Paris was the opening of the public *salons* known as the *Hôtels* of Grèves and of Soissons. It produced a perfect revolution among the members of the light-fingered fraternity, who had heretofore exercised their profession in secluded places, their operations being, for the most part, simply and clumsily performed. Now, however, the keenest of them united for the formation of a League, and the invention of new devices whereby to appropriate the funds of the unwary ; and from their consultations resulted many combinations until then unknown.

"Piquet, lansquenet, faro, and other popular games became actual gold-fields for the associated deceivers. Even roulette, a game invented especially for the public to play in all security, became subject to their machinations. . . .

profit of the Prince of R——, who then resided at Clagny, and the majority of whose officers were members of our Society.

To my shame be it said, I made rapid progress under the lessons of my instructor. I acquired special facility in making a false cut and in veering a card; while, aided by a pair of long ruffles, I shuffled and palmed with an adroitness that deceived even the watchful eyes of adepts, and enabled me to fleece many an unsuspecting player at my pleasure. My remarkable dexterity so hastened the progress of my fortunes that within a few weeks I found myself in possession of a considerable sum, even apart from the gains which I felt myself bound in honor to share with my confederates.

I no longer feared, under these circumstances, to inform Manon of our loss at Chaillot; but, in order to console her on breaking this unpleasant news to her, I hired a furnished house, in which we took up our abode with every appearance of affluence and security.

During all this time Tiberge had not failed to pay me frequent visits. He was never done with his moralizing. Untiringly did he point out to me the wrong I was doing my conscience, my honor, and my fortunes. I received his

“The number of Greeks continued to increase, and included even courtiers and men of society, whose duty was to discover and ensnare new victims; the efforts of the Greeks being especially directed against five classes of individuals: First, strangers lately arrived in the city; second, litigants who had been successful in lawsuits; third, unprofessional gamblers who were lucky at roulette; fourth, sons of good families, heirs to property; and fifth, clerks, cashiers, and other persons who had acquired control of any funds.

“This system of regular and preconcerted robbery realized immense profits, and the manœuvres of the gamblers became so bold and scandalous that Louis XV. closed the *salons* of Grèves and Soissons, and revived the old edicts against games of hazard, throughout his kingdom.”

admonitions in a friendly spirit, and, though I was not in the least disposed to heed them, I took his zeal on my behalf in good part, knowing, as I did, the source from which it arose. Now and then I would banter him good-naturedly, in Manon's very presence, and would urge him not to be more scrupulous than many a bishop and other ecclesiastic who found no difficulty in reconciling a mistress and a benefice. "Look there," I would say to him, pointing to the eyes of my own lady-love, "and tell me if there be any faults which so beautiful a cause would not justify?" He did not lose patience, and, indeed, bore with



me very far; but when he saw that I was growing richer day by day, and had not only repaid him his hundred *pistoles*, but, having taken a new house and doubled my expenditure, was about to give myself up more completely than ever to pleasure, his whole tone and manner underwent a change.

He upbraided me for my callousness, warned me of the penalties of Divine displeasure, and predicted some of the misfortunes that were not long in overtaking me.

"You cannot make me believe," he said to me, "that the money which serves to maintain you in your immoralities comes to you in a legitimate way. You have acquired it wrongfully; and even so will it be snatched

from your grasp. The most terrible of all punishments God could inflict on you would be to leave you to enjoy it undisturbed. All my admonitions," he added, "have been wasted upon you; and I foresee only too clearly that they are in danger of becoming irksome to you. Farewell, therefore, weak and ungrateful friend! May your guilty pleasures vanish like shadows; may your good fortune and your money be lost to you irretrievably; and, as for yourself, may you be left, destitute and alone, to realize the vanity of those joys which have so madly infatuated



you! Then, and only then, will you find me ready to love and to aid you. For the time being, I break off all intercourse with you, in detestation of the life you are leading!"

This apostolic tirade he delivered to me in my own room, in Manon's presence, and then rose to depart. I made an effort to detain him, but was checked by Manon, who said that he was a madman whom we were well rid of.

His words, however, did not fail to leave some impression upon me. I thus note the various occasions when I felt my heart revert toward rectitude, because it was to the memory of such moments that I afterwards owed much of the strength which supported me during the unhappiest hours of my life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE distress which this scene with Tiberge had caused me was soon dispelled by Manon's caresses. We continued to lead a life that was all made up of love and pleasure. With the increase of our wealth came redoubled affection. Venus and the Goddess of Fortune had no slaves happier or more loving than we. Why call this world an abode of misery, when it can offer the enjoyment of such exquisite delights as these? Alas! Because they have the drawback of passing away all too soon. What other felicity would mortals desire, if such joys as these were of a kind to last forever? Ours shared the common fate of being short-lived and bringing in their train the bitterest regrets.

My gains at play had become so considerable that I was thinking of investing part of my money. My successes were no secret to our servants—being especially well known to my own valet and Manon's maid, before both of whom we were in the habit of talking quite unreservedly and without any misgivings. The maid was a pretty girl, and my valet's sweetheart. They had to deal with young and lenient employers, whom they supposed that they would have no difficulty in deceiving. They conceived the design of doing so, and carried it into effect with results

so disastrous to us that we were thrown into a plight from which we were never able to recover.

We had supped one evening with M. Lescaut, and it was close upon midnight when we returned home. I called my valet, and Manon her maid, but neither of them made their appearance. We were told that they had not been seen about the house since eight o'clock, and that they had gone out after having had some chests carried away, in obedience to orders which they said they had received from me. I had a presentiment of part of the truth, but I enter-

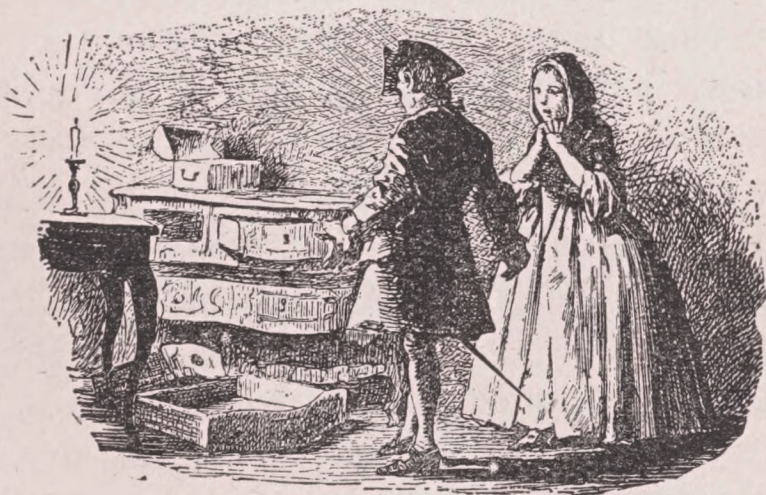


tained no suspicions that were not exceeded by what I discovered upon entering my room. The lock on my closet-door had been forced, and my money, together with all my clothes, had been made away with. While I was pondering by myself over this misadventure, Manon ran in great dismay to tell me that her apartment had been similarly plundered. So cruelly did I feel this blow that it was only by a supreme effort of self-control that I restrained myself from bursting into tears. The fear of imparting my own despair to Manon forced me to assume an air of indifference. I told her jestingly that I would revenge myself on some dupe at the *Hôtel de Transylvanie*. She seemed to take our misfortune so much to heart, however, that her

grief had far more effect in depressing me than my pretended cheerfulness had in preventing her from giving way to utter despondency.

“We are ruined!” she cried, as the tears streamed from her eyes. In vain did I strive to console her by my caresses, for my own tears betrayed my consternation and despair. We were, in sober truth, so completely beggared that not a shred was left us save what we had on our backs.

I decided to send at once for M. Lescaut. He advised



me to go without delay to the Lieutenant of Police and the Provost-Marshal of Paris. I went, and, in going, I brought upon myself a still greater calamity. For not only was my own trouble and that to which I put these two officers of justice entirely barren of results, but I thus afforded Lescaut an opportunity of talking to his sister; and he took advantage of my absence to inspire her with an atrocious design. He told her of a certain M. de G—— M——, an old voluptuary who paid for his pleasures with a lavish hand; and so impressed her with the many advantages she would gain by earning his liberality, that—disturbed in mind as she was by our misfortune—she yielded a full assent to all his propositions.

This most honorable bargain was struck before my return ; its actual fulfilment being postponed until the following day, when Lescaut should have apprised M. de G—— M—— of the arrangement.

I found Lescaut waiting for me when I reached home, but Manon had retired to bed in her own room, leaving orders with her servant to tell me that, as she felt in need of rest, she hoped that I would allow her to pass the night alone. Lescaut left me, after offering me a few *pistoles*, which I accepted. It was nearly four o'clock when I went to bed ; and as even then I lay for a long while revolving in my mind some method of retrieving my fortunes, it was so late when I fell asleep that I did not awake until between eleven and twelve o'clock. Rising at once, I hastened to inquire how Manon was feeling ; and was informed that she had gone out an hour before with her brother, who had called for her in a hackney-coach.

Although such an expedition with Lescaut struck me as mysterious, I forced myself to repress my suspicions, and whiled away some hours in reading. At last, unable any longer to master my disquietude, I strode rapidly back and forth through our apartments, until, in Manon's room, I caught sight of a sealed letter lying on the table. It was in her writing, and addressed to me. I tore it open with a shudder of mortal dread, and read as follows :

“ I swear to you, my dear Chevalier, that you are the idol of my heart, and that in all this world there is not another man whom I could ever love as I love you. But do you not see, my poor dear soul, that in the plight to which we are now reduced, constancy is a foolish virtue ? Do you suppose that weak mortals can indulge in tenderness while they lack bread to eat ? Hunger, I fear, would

lead me into some fatal mistake ; some fine day I should breathe my last when I thought to heave only a love-sigh. I adore you ; rest assured of that ; but leave the management of our fortunes to me for awhile. Woe be to him who gets entangled in my meshes ! for I seek only to bring wealth and happiness to my Chevalier.

“ My brother will give you tidings of your Manon, and will tell you how she wept at the necessity of leaving you.”

It would be difficult for me to describe my state of mind after the perusal of this letter ; for to this day I do not

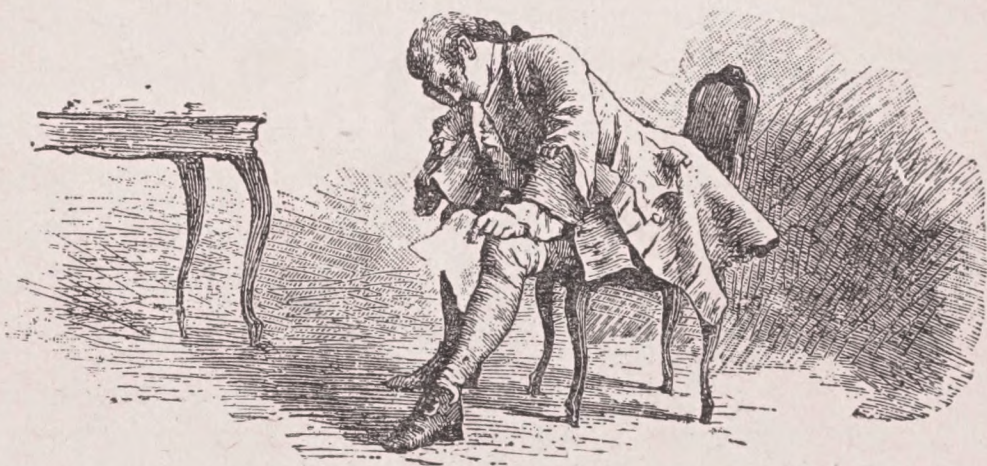


know in what category to place the feelings that then swept over me. It was one of those mental crises which stand out, separate and distinct, from all others in a man's life, to which his previous experience supplies no parallel, and the very conception of which it is impossible to convey to other minds, as they—from the nature of the case—can have no clue to guide them to it. Nor is it easy to analyze them clearly to one's self : for, being, as they are, solitary instances of their kind, they can be brought into relation with nothing in the memory, and cannot even be compared with any known feeling.

Of whatever nature my emotions may have been, however, among them were certainly grief, vexation, jealousy,

and shame. Happy had I been if there had not mingled with them a love that was stronger than them all!

“She loves me!” I cried; “I must fain believe it; for how could she do otherwise, unless she were a veritable fiend? What claims did man ever have upon a heart that I have not upon hers? What more is there that I can do for her, after all that I have sacrificed for her sake? Yet she abandons me, and thinks, ungrateful girl, to shield herself from my reproaches by declaring that she has not ceased to love me! She pleads her dread of hunger! God of Love, what grossness of sentiment! How



poor a return for the delicacy of my own! Hunger! Have I feared it? I, who so willingly expose myself to its terrors for love of her, by renouncing my fortune and the comforts of my home! I, who have foregone all but the very necessities of life, that I might indulge her slightest whims and caprices! She adores me, so she says. Did you adore me, heartless girl, I know from whom you would have sought advice! You would not have left me without at least bidding me farewell. It is I who can best say what cruel anguish there is in being separated from one whom we adore. Surely, no one could be sane, and yet willingly incur it!”

My lamentations were interrupted by a visitor whom

I little expected to see—none other than Lescaut himself.

“Villain!” I cried, grasping my sword, “where is Manon? What have you done with her?”

This outburst alarmed him. He replied that if I received him in this fashion when he came to give me an account of the greatest service he could have rendered me, he would take his leave, never to set foot in my house again. I ran to the door of the room and closed it carefully.

“Do not flatter yourself,” I said, confronting him, “that you will be able once more to make a dupe of me



and impose upon my credulity with your fables! Either draw and defend yourself or restore Manon to me!”

“Curse it, man,” he rejoined, “do not be so hasty. That is the very subject that brings me here. I have come to tell you of a stroke of good fortune which you little expect, and for which you will admit, perhaps, that you are under some obligation to me.”

I desired him to enlighten me at once. He told me that Manon, being unable to bear the fear of poverty, and above all the idea of having to submit suddenly to the reduction of our establishment, had begged him to procure her the acquaintance of Monsieur de G—— M——, who

had the name of being a man of generosity. He was careful not to tell me that this had been at his advice, nor that he had paved the way before taking her.

“I took her to see him this morning,” he continued, “and the worthy man found her so attractive, that he at once invited her to accompany him to his country-house, where he has gone to spend a few days. I,” added Lescaut, “quickly realizing how this might be turned to your advantage, gave him adroitly to understand that Manon had suffered considerable losses; and I so spurred his generosity that he made her a present of two hundred *pistoles* to begin with. I told him that this would do very well for



the present; but that the future would bring many wants upon my sister; that she had, moreover, undertaken the care of a young brother who had been left on our hands by the death of our father and mother; and that if he thought her worthy of his regard, he would not permit her to suffer through this poor child, whom she looked upon as a part of herself. This story did not fail to touch him. He promised to take a comfortable house for you and Manon; for you, of course, are the poor little orphan brother. He agrees to furnish it suitably, and to allow you a round four hundred *livres* every month, which, if I

count aright, will make four thousand eight hundred *livres* a year. Before going to his country-seat, he left orders with his steward to look for a house, and to have it ready on his return. Then you will again see Manon, who bade me tell you that she sent you a thousand kisses, and assure you that she loves you more than ever."

I sat down, pondering over this curious dispensation of Fate. Filled with conflicting emotions, I was in a state of indecision so difficult to terminate that I remained for a long while without making any response to the numerous questions which Lescaut asked me in rapid succession. Once more, at that moment, did honor and virtue assert themselves and make me feel the stings of remorse. I sighed as my thoughts reverted to Amiens, to my home, to St. Sulpice, to all those spots where I had lived in blameless innocence. How vast was the gulf which separated me from that state of happiness! I saw it now only from afar, like a phantom vision, which still inspired me with yearning and regret, but which was too dim and unsubstantial to rouse me to effort. "By what fatality," I asked myself, "have I become thus steeped in guilt? Love is an innocent passion; how has it been transformed for me into a source of sin and misery? Who was there to prevent my living peacefully and virtuously with Manon? Why did I not wed her before claiming any favors from her love? My father, with his deep affection for me, would surely have consented to my doing so, had I but urged him with proper entreaties. Aye! My father would have grown to love her himself, as a sweet girl, only too worthy of being his son's wife. I should now be happy in Manon's love, in my father's affection, in the esteem of honorable men, in the blessings of fortune, and the serene tranquillity of a virtuous life. How melancholy a contrast does the reality present! Here am I called

upon to play a part so vile that I shudder to think of it! What! Must I then consent to share . . . Yet how can I hesitate, since Manon has so decreed, and since I must lose her unless I comply?"

"M. Lescaut," I exclaimed, closing my eyes as if to shut out these torturing reflections, "if it has been your intention to do me a service, I thank you. You might, indeed, have found a more honorable method; but it is a settled thing, as I understand it. Let us, then, dismiss all other considerations but those of how we may best profit by your exertions, and carry your project into effect."



Lescaut—whom my indignation, followed by such long-continued silence, had considerably embarrassed—was delighted to see me come to a decision so totally opposed to the one which he had doubtless dreaded that I would adopt. He was anything but courageous, as I had subsequently even better occasion to know.

"Yes, yes," he hastened to reply; "I have done you a very good turn, and you will yet find that it is more to our advantage than you are disposed to believe."

We then consulted as to how we should disarm the suspicions which Monsieur de G—— M—— might conceive as to the reality of our fraternal relationship when he found

me taller and somewhat older than he probably expected. We could hit upon no better plan than for me to assume the manner of a countrified simpleton in his presence, while we led him to believe that I intended entering the Church, and was preparing myself for that career by daily attendance at college.

We decided, also, that I should dress myself very shabbily on the first occasion that I was allowed the honor of paying my respects to him. He returned to town some three or four days after this ; and himself installed Manon in the house which his steward had punctually prepared



for her reception. She at once let Lescaut know of her return ; and when he had brought me word of it, we went together to the house to see her. Her old gallant had already left her.

Despite the resignation with which I had submitted to Manon's wishes, I could not altogether repress the rebellious dissatisfaction in my heart on seeing her again. My manner towards her was sad and dejected. The joy of having her once more at my side did not entirely counterbalance my grief at her infidelity. Her delight at being with me again seemed, on the contrary, to be without alloy. Upon her reproaching me for my coldness toward her, the words "Faithless and inconstant girl !" burst in-

voluntarily from my lips, accompanied by a bitter sigh. At first she rallied me on my folly ; but when she realized, from the sadness with which I continued to gaze at her, what pain it was costing me to reconcile myself to a change so opposed to my honor and my wishes, she withdrew alone to her dressing-room. Following her a moment afterwards, I found her sitting there, bathed in tears. I asked her why she was weeping.

“Can you ask?” was her reply. “Do you suppose I care to live, if all that my life can accomplish now is to make you look sad-faced and grave? You have been here



for an hour, and not a single kiss have you given me yet, while you have been submitting to my caresses all this time with the majestic indifference of the Grand Turk in his seraglio.”

“Listen to me, Manon,” answered I, as I embraced her, “I cannot help letting you see that my heart is very, very heavy. I will say nothing at present about the agonies of fear into which you threw me by your unlooked-for flight ; nor about your cruelty in deserting me without a word of consolation, after spending the whole night away from my arms. The charm of your presence can make me forget all this, and more than this. But do you imag-

ine that I can look forward without sighing, aye, and weeping," and, as I spoke, the tears rose to my eyes, "to the vile and unhappy life which you expect me to lead in this house? I put aside all consideration of my honor and of my rank; it is too late now for such feeble influences as these to enter into rivalry with a love like mine. But can you not understand how bitter it is for me to see that love so ill requited, nay, so cruelly used by an ungrateful and heartless mistress? ——"

"Stay!" she interrupted. "Why torture me, dear Chevalier, with reproaches which, coming as they do from you, pierce me to the very heart? I see what it is that wounds your feelings. I had hoped, I own, that you would consent to my project of doing something towards retrieving our fortunes; and it was out of consideration for your delicate sense of honor that I began to put it into execution without consulting you. But I renounce it, now that I find you so strongly disapprove of it."

She added that all she asked of me was a little forbearance during the remainder of the day; explaining that she had already received two hundred *pistoles* from her old lover, and that he had promised to bring her, that evening, a handsome necklace of pearls, and other jewels, as well as one half of the annual allowance he had agreed to make her.

"Only give me time," she begged, "to get his presents into my possession. I assure you, on my word of honor, that he will not be able to boast of having obtained any favors from me; for as yet I have put him off until our return to town. He has, indeed, kissed my hand some thousands of times, and it is only right that he should pay for that pleasure. It will not be dear at five or six thousand francs, making the price proportionate to his wealth and age."

The resolution she had taken gave me far more pleasure than the prospect of gaining five thousand francs. I was encouraged to believe that my heart was not yet lost to all sense of honor, when I felt how deeply it rejoiced at escaping from infamy. But I was born for short-lived joys and lasting sorrows. Fortune rescued me from the brink of one precipice only to hurl me over another.

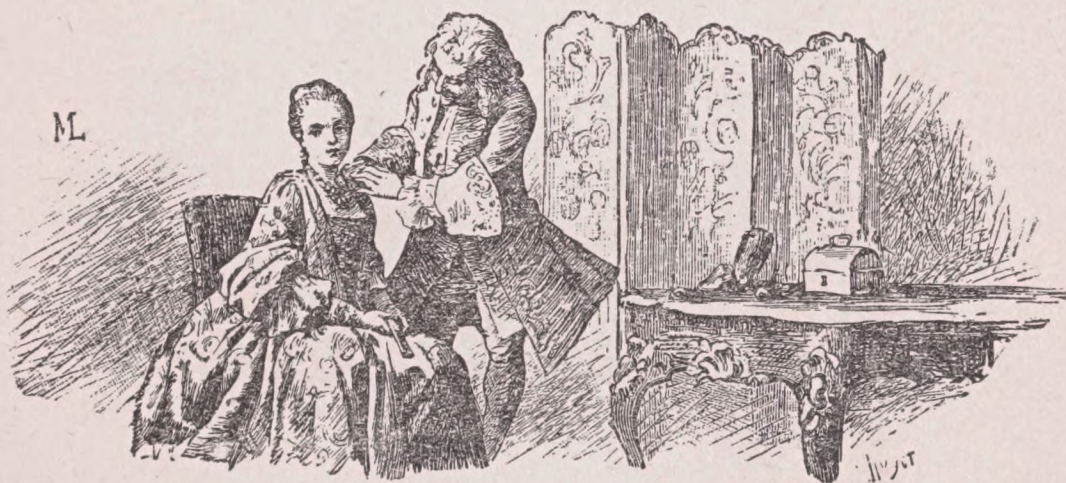
When I had evinced my delight at her change of purpose by a shower of kisses, I told Manon that M. Lescaut must be informed of it, so that our measures might be taken in concert. He was at first inclined to meet it with



some opposition; but the mention of the four or five thousand *livres* of ready money to be gained soon won his cheerful assent to our views. It was accordingly arranged that we should all three be present at supper with M. de G—— M——. Our object in this was two-fold. In the first place, we anticipated much diversion from the little comedy in which I was to play the part of Manon's school-boy brother; and, secondly, we should thus prevent the old rake from taking any undue liberties with my mistress, in the exercise of those rights which he would suppose himself to have acquired by paying so liberally in advance.

Lescaut and I were to take our leave upon his going up-stairs to the room in which he expected to pass the night, and Manon, instead of accompanying him, promised to slip out of the house and spend it with me. Lescaut undertook to have a coach at the door at the right moment.

Supper-time drew near, and M. de G—— M—— was not long in making his appearance. Lescaut remained in the parlor with his sister. The old man's first proceeding was to present his *inamorata* with a necklace, bracelets, and ear-rings of pearls, worth at the very least a thousand



crowns. He next counted out to her in bright *louis d'or* the sum of two thousand four hundred *livres*, which constituted one half of the promised annual allowance. He accompanied his presents with a number of courtly compliments in the old-school style of gallantry.

Manon could not refuse him a few kisses; they were the only title she acquired to the money he gave her. I was listening at the door and waiting for Lescaut to give me the signal to enter the room. He came and took me by the hand as soon as Manon had secured the money and the jewels, and leading me up to M. de G—— M——, he bade me make him a bow. I made two or three, bowing almost to the ground each time.

“You must excuse him, sir,” said Lescaut; “the youngster is quite a greenhorn, and very far, as you can perceive, from having Parisian manners; but we hope that a little practice will give him some polish. You will have the honor,” added he, turning to me, “of often seeing this gentleman here; be sure you profit by so good an example.”

The old gallant seemed pleased to see me. He patted me once or twice on the cheek, and told me that I was a fine lad, but that I must be on my guard in Paris, where



young folk were very apt to be led into dissipation. Lescaut assured him that I was of so virtuous a disposition that I talked of nothing but of becoming a priest, and that my chief amusement consisted in building miniature chapels.

“I think he is like Manon,” remarked the old gentleman, raising my chin with his hand.

I replied, with affected stupidity, “That’s because we are of the same blood and bone, sir; and, besides, I love my sister Manon just as if she were part of myself.”

“Do you hear that?” he said to Lescaut. “He’s a bright lad, and it’s a pity that he has not seen enough of the world to give him a little better manner.”

“Oh, sir!” I answered, “I have seen a great many of the world in our churches at home, and I dare say that I shall find some in Paris with no better wits than my own.”

“Come!” he exclaimed, “that’s an excellent sally for a country lad!”

All our conversation during supper was of much the same kind. Manon, who was in the merriest of moods, came more than once within an ace of spoiling all by her uncontrollable outbursts of laughter. Before we left the



table I found an opportunity of telling the old dupe his own story, not omitting even the sorry fate that was in store for him. Lescaut and Manon were on thorns while I was recounting it—especially when I drew his portrait to the life; but his vanity prevented his recognizing himself in my description, and I gave it such an adroit turn as I concluded, that he was the first to declare it very droll.

I have good reasons, as you will see, for dwelling at such length upon this ludicrous episode.

As bed-time drew near he began to grow eloquent on the subject of his passion and his impatience. Lescaut and I thereupon took our leave, and he was shown to his room. Manon, finding some pretext for leaving it, ran to

the door and joined us. The coach, which was waiting for us a few houses further down the street, drove up to receive us, and we lost not an instant in leaving that quarter of the town behind us.

Although I could not shut my eyes to the fact that this proceeding was a piece of downright rascality, I did not consider it by any means the most iniquitous that I had to reproach myself with. The money which I had won at play lay far heavier on my conscience. We profited as little by the one as by the other, however, and Heaven ordained that the less dishonorable of these two offences should be the more severely punished.

CHAPTER IX.

MONSIEUR DE G—— M—— was not long in discovering that he had been duped. I do not know whether he took any steps to find us that very evening; but his influence was great enough to prevent his efforts to trace us from remaining long without result; while we were imprudent enough on our side to trust too much to the vast extent of Paris and the distance of our quarter of it from that in which he resided. Not only did he obtain full information as to our whereabouts and our affairs for the time being, but he found out also who I was, the life I had been leading in Paris, Manon's former intrigue with B——, and the way in which she had deceived him—in a word, all the scandalous portions of our history.

He thereupon decided to have us arrested and treated less as criminals than as arrant libertines. We were still in bed when an Agent of Police entered our room, with half a dozen Guards. They first seized our, or rather, M. de G—— M——'s, money, and, having roughly compelled us to rise, led us to the door, where we found two coaches, into one of which poor Manon was forced without any explanation, and driven away, while I was taken in the other to St. Lazare. The despair which such a reverse of for-

tune as this can cause is to be fully appreciated only by those who have undergone a similar experience.

Our guards were so heartless as to deny me the privilege of embracing Manon, or even of saying a word of farewell to her. For a long while I remained in ignorance of what had become of her. It was perhaps fortunate for me that I did not know it at first; for so terrible a catastrophe would have cost me my reason, probably my life.

My hapless mistress was thus torn from me, and incarcerated in a place too horrible for me to name. What a



fate was this for a being whose incomparable loveliness would have placed her on the proudest throne on earth, if all men had seen her as I saw her and loved her as I loved! She was not inhumanly treated there, but was imprisoned in a narrow cell, and condemned to perform an allotted task of work each day, as the requisite condition of obtaining an allowance of nauseous food. I did not learn these sad details until long afterwards, when I had myself undergone several months of severe and irksome penance.

As my captors likewise refused to tell me where they were ordered to take me, I discovered what my fate was to be only when we reached the gates of St. Lazare. I would have welcomed death, at that moment, in preference to what I believed to be in store for me. I had terrible conceptions of the nature of this establishment. My

dismay was increased when, on our entrance, the guards again searched my pockets, to satisfy themselves that no arms or other means of defence had been left about me.

The Superior made his appearance before many minutes had elapsed, having been notified of my arrival. He greeted me very kindly.

"Father," I said to him, "spare me any indignities. Rather than submit to a single one, I would die a hundred deaths."

"Be under no apprehension, sir," he replied. "You



have only to conduct yourself well, and we shall neither of us have any occasion to find fault with the other."

He requested me to follow him to an upper room, and I acquiesced without any attempt at resistance. The officers of police accompanied us as far as the door, where the Superior gave them the signal to withdraw, and then entered with me.

"I am your prisoner, it seems," said I. "Well, good Father, what do you intend to do with me?"

He told me that he was very glad to hear me adopt a reasonable tone; and went on to say that his duty would be to endeavor to inspire me with a taste for virtue and religion, and mine to profit by his exhortations and advice; and that if I would but respond—however little—to his

efforts on my behalf, I should find nothing but pleasure in my seclusion.

“Pleasure!” I exclaimed: “Ah, Father, you little know what alone, in all this world, can give me pleasure!”

“I do know,” he replied, “but I hope that your inclinations will change.”

I saw by this answer that he was acquainted with my adventures, and, perhaps, with my name. I begged him to enlighten me on this point; and he then told me frankly that he had been informed of everything.



This discovery was the cruellest punishment of all. I burst into a torrent of tears, and exhibited every sign of utter despair. Nothing could console me for the humiliation of thus becoming a by-word to all my acquaintances and the disgrace of my family. For eight whole days I remained in a state of the deepest dejection, unable to understand anything or think of anything but the stigma which now rested upon me. Not even the memory of Manon could add anything to the intensity of my grief: at least, it mingled with it only as a feeling which lay back of this new anguish; and the dominant emotions in my breast were shame and mortification. The full force of these sentiments is not known to every one. The ordinary

run of men are susceptible to the influence of only five or six passions, in the round of which they pass their lives, and to which all their mental agitations may be reduced. Deprive them of love and hate, pleasure and pain, hope and fear, and they virtually cease to feel at all. But persons of finer temperament can be affected in a thousand varying ways; they would seem to be possessed of more than five senses, and to be capable of receiving the impression of ideas and sensations that transcend the limitations of average human nature. And, conscious as they are of this superiority, which lifts them above the vulgar level,



there is nothing of which they are so jealously tenacious. Hence it is that they are so impatient of submitting to contempt and ridicule, and that shame is one of their most violent emotions.

This sad advantage was mine at St. Lazare. So excessive did my grief appear to the Superior, that his fear of its possible consequences led him to treat me with the utmost kindness and leniency. He came to see me two or three times a day, often taking me out with him for a walk in the garden; and he poured forth his exhortations and pious admonitions with inexhaustible zeal. I listened to them meekly and even manifested some gratitude towards him; which made him hopeful of my ultimate conversion.

“ You have such a gentle and amiable disposition,” he said to me one day, “ that I cannot understand your having been guilty of the wickedness of which you are accused. Two things fill me with astonishment : one, how, with all your good qualities, you could have abandoned yourself to licentious excesses ; and the other, which strikes me as even more amazing, how you can give such willing attention to my advice and teaching after having lived for several years in habitual immorality. If it be the result of repentance, you are a signal example of the mercy of Heaven ; if it be from natural goodness of heart, you are at any rate possessed of an excellent basis of character, which leads me to hope that we shall not be under the necessity of keeping you here very long in order to reclaim you to a virtuous and exemplary life.”

I was delighted beyond measure to find that he entertained such a good opinion of me, and resolved to enhance it by giving him every reason to be satisfied with my conduct ; for I felt convinced that this was the surest method of shortening the term of my imprisonment. I asked him for some books. He was surprised, on allowing me to choose for myself what I would read, to see me select some authors of a serious character. I pretended to apply myself to study with the utmost ardor, and lost no opportunity of giving him the impression that the change he desired to see in me was actually taking place.

It was only an outward one, however. Let me confess with shame that at St. Lazare I played the part of a hypocrite. When alone, instead of studying, I spent my time in bewailing my hard fate. I cursed my prison, and the tyranny which kept me there. No sooner had I gained some respite from the dejection into which my disgrace had thrown me than I once more fell a victim to the torments of Love.

Manon's absence, my uncertainty as to her fate, and fear that I should never see her again—such were the sole subjects of my melancholy meditations. I pictured her in the arms of G—— M——; for that had been my first thought; and, so far from imagining that he had subjected her to the same treatment as myself, I was fully persuaded that he had had me put out of the way only to gain undisturbed possession of her.

Thus did I pass day after day and night after night, every one of which seemed to me of interminable length. My only hope lay in the success of my hypocrisy. With



anxious care did I scan the Superior's face and note his every word, to satisfy myself as to what opinion he was forming of me; while I made it my constant study to please him, for was he not the arbiter of my fate?

I soon perceived that I was firmly established in his good graces, and that I might safely count upon his willingness to serve me. Summoning up all my boldness one day, I asked him whether my release depended upon his decision. He replied that he had not absolute control of the matter, but that he had reason to hope that, upon his representations, Monsieur de G—— M—— (at whose solicitation the Lieutenant-General of Police had ordered my confinement) would consent to my restoration to liberty.

“May I flatter myself,” I meekly inquired, “that the two months’ imprisonment which I have already undergone will appear to him a sufficient expiation of my offences?”

He promised to speak to Monsieur de G—— M—— on the subject, if I so desired. I begged him earnestly to do me this service. Two days afterwards he informed me that G—— M—— had been so much impressed by the good accounts he had heard of me that he not only seemed inclined to set me free, but had even evinced a strong desire to know me better, and proposed paying me a visit in



my prison. Although I could not anticipate his presence with any pleasure, I regarded it as a step on the road to my liberty.

He carried out his intention and came to St. Lazare. He seemed to me more dignified in manner, and less of a silly old dotard than when I had seen him in Manon’s house. After making some sensible observations on the subject of my misconduct, he went on to say, in justification, apparently, of his own immorality, that while it is permissible for weak mortals to indulge in certain pleasures which nature imperiously demands, it is only right that knavery and dishonest trickery should meet with severe pun-

ishment. I listened to him with an air of submission which seemed greatly to gratify him. Nor did I exhibit any signs of resentment even when he proceeded to rally me on my brotherly relationship to Lescaut and Manon, and on the little chapels of which he said I had doubtless made a great many at St. Lazare, since I took so much pleasure in that pious amusement. But, unhappily for him and for myself, he let slip the remark that Manon, too, had probably built some very pretty ones at the *Hôpital*.

Despite the shudder which the name of that place sent



through my frame, I retained sufficient self-control to ask him quietly to explain his meaning.

“’Tis as I say,” he replied. “For two months past she has been learning lessons in virtue at the *Hôpital Général*,* and I trust that she has profited by them as much as you have at St. Lazare.”

The prospect of an eternity of imprisonment, or of death itself, could not have forced me to restrain my rage at this hideous intelligence. I threw myself upon him with such fury that half my strength was consumed by its very vio-

*A portion of the *Hôpital Général* of Paris was, at this time, used as a place of confinement and reformatory for abandoned females of the lowest class. Hence the Chevalier’s horror.—TRANSLATOR.

lence. I had enough remaining, however, to hurl him to the ground and clutch him by the throat. I had nearly strangled him when the noise of his fall and the few piercing shrieks he was able to utter before I stifled his voice, brought the Superior and several of the Brotherhood to my room, and he was rescued from my grasp. I was myself almost exhausted, and panting for breath.

“Just Heaven!” I cried, with sobs of agony, “how can I live another moment after hearing of infamy like this?”

I strove to throw myself once more upon the barbarian who had dealt me this cruel blow, but they held me fast. My despair, my groans, my tears, transcended all conception. I raved so wildly that all present, ignorant as they were of the cause, looked at one another with as much alarm as surprise. Monsieur de G—— M—— was meanwhile rearranging his peruke and cravat; and, in his indignation at having been subjected to such maltreatment, he ordered the Superior to see that I was more closely confined than ever, and to punish me by the infliction of all the pains and penalties which are well known to be resorted to at St. Lazare.

“No, sir,” said the Superior. “We do not treat persons of the Chevalier’s rank in that manner. He is, besides, so gentle and courteous that I find it difficult to believe that he could so completely have lost control of himself without strong provocation.”

This reply incensed M. de G—— M—— to the last degree. He took his departure, vowing that the Superior and I, and every one else who dared to oppose him, should yet learn that he was not to be thwarted. Ordering his priests to conduct M. de G—— M—— to the door, the Superior remained alone with me, and begged me to tell him at once what had caused this disturbance.

“Oh, Father!” said I, still sobbing like a child, “try to conceive the most horrible act of cruelty, imagine the most atrocious of barbarities, and you will know the deed which that vile wretch G—— M—— has had the baseness to commit! Alas! He has crushed my very heart within me; never shall I recover from this blow! Let me tell you all,” I added, my voice choking with tears. “You are kind and good—you will pity me!”

I told him briefly the story of my long and unconquerable passion for Manon; of the flourishing condition of our fortunes before we had been fleeced by our own servants;



of the offers which G—— M—— had made to my mistress; of the bargain they had concluded together, and of the way in which it had been broken. I represented things to him, I must own, in the light most favorable to ourselves.

“Now you perceive,” I went on, “the source of M. de G—— M——’s zeal for my reformation. He commanded influence enough to have me confined here purely from motives of revenge. I could forgive him were this all, but, Father, it is not all. He has had my dearer half ruthlessly torn from me and thrown into ignominious imprisonment in the *Hôpital*. Had he not the audacity to tell me so this very day with his own lips? In the *Hôpital*, my Father—think of it! Merciful Heaven! My

sweet mistress, the beloved queen of my heart, in the *Hôpital*—as though she were the vilest of creatures! How can I find fortitude enough to survive this grief and shame? ”

The good Father, distressed at seeing me in such deep affliction, did his best to console me. He told me that he had never understood my adventure as I related it. He had been aware, indeed, that I had been leading an immoral life, but had hitherto been under the impression that M. de G—— M—— had interfered simply because he felt bound to do so out of friendship and esteem for my family. This, he



said, was the only ground which M. de G—— M—— had taken when explaining the matter to him. What I had just told him, he assured me, would quite change the aspect of affairs for me; and he had no doubt that the faithful report of my story, which he intended to make to the Lieutenant-General of Police, would go far towards obtaining me my liberty.

He then asked me how it was that it had never occurred to me to let my family know of what had taken place, since they had had no share in consigning me to prison. I parried this suggestion by pleading that I dreaded the pain such a confession would cause my father, and the

shame I should feel in making it. Finally, he promised to go at once to the Lieutenant-General of Police, "were it only," he added, "to prevent some worse proceeding on the part of M. de G—— M——, who left here in great displeasure, and who is a man of sufficient influence to be a formidable enemy."

I awaited the Superior's return with all the anxiety of a poor wretch whose sentence is about to be pronounced. It was inexpressible torture for me to think of Manon at the *Hôpital*. Besides the infamy with which the place was associated in my mind, I was in utter ignorance as to what treatment she was being subjected to there; and the recollection of some details which I had heard concerning that house of horrors threw me every moment into fresh paroxysms of rage. So fully was I resolved to go to her aid, at whatever cost and by whatever means—that I would have set fire to St. Lazare, had it been impossible for me to escape in any other way.

I began to consider, therefore, what course there remained for me to adopt, in case the Lieutenant-General should continue to keep me a prisoner there in spite of myself. I taxed my ingenuity to the utmost, and ran over every imaginable possibility in my mind. I could hit upon nothing that held out a certain prospect of escape; and I was afraid that an unsuccessful attempt would only result in my being put under stricter surveillance than ever. I thought of several friends from whom I might hope for aid; but how was I to let them know of my situation?

At last I worked out a plan which seemed to me ingenious enough to have a fair chance of success. Its still further elaboration I postponed until after the return of the Father Superior, in case his errand should have failed and the necessity for it should consequently still exist.

He soon came back. I failed to detect in his face any of the signs of pleasure which accompany good news.

“I have seen the Lieutenant-General of Police,” said he; “but I was too late. M. de G—— M—— went straight to him on leaving here; and prejudiced him so strongly against you that he was on the point of sending me fresh orders to put you under still closer restraint. However, when I acquainted him with the true version of your affairs, he seemed to relent considerably; and, after laughing a little over the incontinence of old M. de G—— M——, he told me that, in order to satisfy him, you must be kept



here for six months; especially, he added, as your stay could not but be beneficial to you. He enjoined me to treat you well; and I promise you that you shall have no reason to complain of my behavior toward you.”

The worthy Superior was long enough in narrating all this to give me time to make a prudent reflection. I saw that I should run the risk of defeating my plans if I betrayed too much impatience for my release. I therefore assured him on the contrary, that, as I must remain, it was a great comfort for me to know that I held some small place in his esteem. I then begged him unaffectedly to grant me a favor which, while it was of no consequence to

any one else, would add much to my own peace of mind ; and this was to send word to one of my friends, a pious priest who lived at St. Sulpice, that I was at St. Lazare ; and to permit me occasionally to receive his visits. This indulgence was accorded me without hesitation.

My friend Tiberge was the one whom I had in mind ; not that I hoped to obtain from him the assistance I needed in order to regain my liberty ; but I wished to make use of him as an indirect and unconscious instrument for the attainment of my purpose. In a word, my project was to write to Lescaut, entrusting to him and our mutual



friends the task of setting me free. The first difficulty was to get my letter into his hands. That office Tiberge must perform. Knowing as he did, however, that Lescaut was my mistress's brother, I feared that he would have some scruples about undertaking this commission. My plan was to enclose my letter to Lescaut in another, to be directed to a respectable acquaintance of mine, with a request that he would immediately deliver the first letter at its address. It was necessary for me to see Lescaut, in order that we might concert measures together ; and my object in writing was to tell him to call upon me at St. Lazare, under pretence of being my eldest brother

and of having come to Paris expressly to acquaint himself with the position of my affairs. I postponed until our meeting the consideration of such steps as we might agree upon as the safest and most expeditious.

CHAPTER X.

THE Father Superior sent word to Tiberge of my desire to have an interview with him. That faithful friend had not so completely lost sight of me as to be ignorant of my adventure. He knew that I was at St. Lazare; and



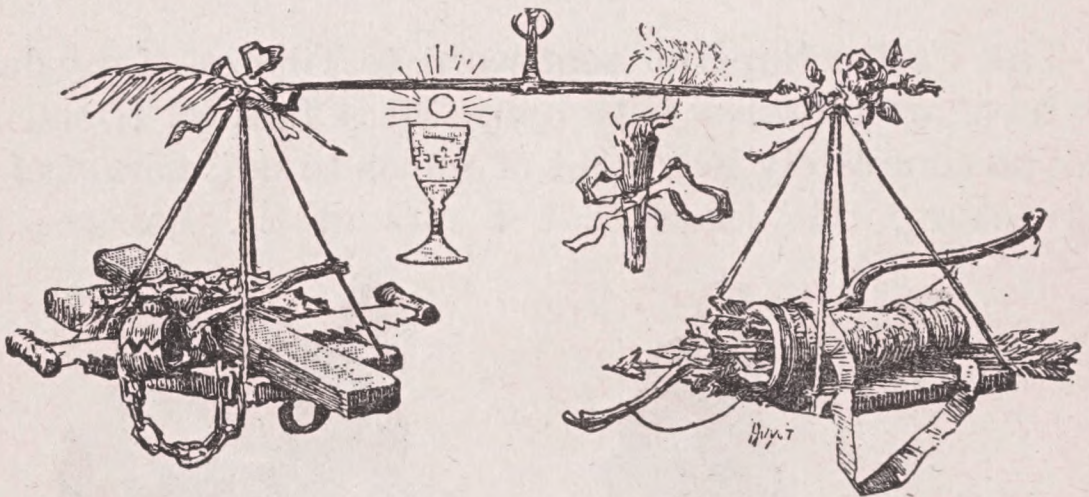
probably did not view altogether with regret a disgrace which he thought might result in my reformation. He lost no time in responding to my summons.

Our conversation was friendly in the extreme. He was anxious to know my present frame of mind, and I opened my heart to him without reserve, save on the subject of my contemplated flight.

“In your eyes, dear friend,” I said to him, “I do not wish to appear other than I am. If you hoped to find here

a friend of virtuous inclinations and well-controlled desires—a libertine awakened by divine chastisement to a sense of his errors—in a word, a heart freed from the bondage of love and disenchanted with the charms of its Manon—then, frankly, you have judged of me too favorably. As I was when you left me four months ago, so you see me now, still in love, and still made miserable by that fatal attachment, from which, nevertheless, I do not despair of deriving happiness in the end ! ”

He replied that this avowal showed me to be in a condition of mind that was utterly inexcusable. “ There are,



indeed,” he said, “ many sinners who become so intoxicated with the delusive happiness of vice, as to openly prefer it to the true happiness of virtue ; but they cling to what is, at any rate, a semblance of felicity, and are the dupes of appearances. But, to recognize, as you do, that the object of your affections can only lead you into guilt and misery—and to persist in voluntarily plunging into an abyss of crime and sorrow, is a contradiction of thought and conduct which does small honor to your powers of reason.”

“ Ah, Tiberge ! ” responded I, “ ’tis easy for you to conquer when your arms are unopposed ! Let me now argue in my turn. Can you pretend that what you call the happiness of virtue is exempt from sufferings, from disap-

pointments, and from cares? In what category, then, do you place the dungeon and the cross, all the horrors of torture and persecution at the hands of tyrants? Do you think, with the Mystics, that whatever torments the body is bliss for the soul? No; you would not venture to uphold so indefensible a paradox. This happiness, then, which you extol so highly, is mingled with innumerable ills; or, to speak more accurately, is but a tangled web of miseries, through which men struggle toward felicity. Now, granting that the force of imagination can transmute into joys these very evils themselves, from the fact



that through them may be attained the coveted goal of happiness—why should you regard as contradictory and irrational an entirely similar spirit in the course that I pursue? I love Manon: I struggle onward, through countless sufferings, toward a life of happiness and peace at her side. The path which I tread is a thorny one; but the hope of reaching my goal sheds gladness on it all the way; and I should hold myself only too richly repaid, by one moment spent with her, for all the sorrows I am enduring to win her. It seems to me, therefore, that all considerations are equal, on your side and on mine; or, if there be any difference, it is rather in my favor—as the happiness for which I hope is near at hand, and the other is

remote ; and as mine is of the same nature as my sufferings—that is, physically perceptible ; while the nature of the other is unknown, and ascertainable only by faith.”

Tiberge appeared to be horrified by this reasoning. Recoiling some paces, he told me very gravely that what I had just said not only outraged common-sense, but was a miserable sophism of impiety and unbelief : “ For,” he added, “ to compare, as you do, the aim of your sufferings with that which Religion sets before us, is an idea of the most monstrous and irreligious kind.”

“ I admit,” was my reply, “ that it is not justifiable ; but, you will please be careful to observe, it is not upon that comparison that my argument rests. My object was to explain what you regard as the inconsistency of my perseverance in an ill-starred love ; and I think I have proved very conclusively that, if inconsistency there be, you escape it no better than myself. It was in this respect alone that I treated the considerations on either side as equal ; and I still maintain that they are so. Do you reply that the goal of Virtue is infinitely loftier than that of Love ? Who but will admit it ? Is that the point in question, however ? Are we not at present concerned with the power which they respectively possess of rendering suffering endurable ?

“ Let us judge by results. How many deserters do we find from strict Virtue, and how few from Love ! Do I hear you answer that although, in the practice of Virtue, there are trials to be endured, they are not essential or inevitable ; that both Tyrant and Cross have long since disappeared, and that many pious and virtuous people are to be seen in the enjoyment of peaceful and happy lives ? My rejoinder is that there are instances, also, of calm and contented love ; and, let me add, as another point of difference that is greatly in my favor, that Love, treacherous

as it often is, holds out the promise of nothing but joy and pleasure, whereas Religion presents for our anticipation a round of sombre and irksome observances.

“Do not be alarmed,” I hastened to add, for I saw that his piety was on the point of taking umbrage, “the only conclusion which I mean to draw now is that there can be no worse method of exorcising love from a man’s heart than to decry its delights to him and to promise him greater gratification in the pursuit of Virtue. Constituted as we are, there is no disputing the fact that our happiness consists in pleasure; I defy any one to form any



other conception of it. Now, the moment the heart is consulted, it will testify that of all possible pleasures, the most exquisite are those of love. To promise it deeper joys from any other source is but to delude it, as it quickly discovers; and such deception inclines it to distrust even the most positive assurances.

“To all preachers, therefore, who would reclaim me to virtue, I say: Tell me, if you will, that it is of all things the most indispensably necessary; but do not disguise the fact that its requirements are austere and rigorous. Prove beyond all question that the delights of love are fleeting; that they are forbidden; that indulgence in them will be followed by eternal punishment; prove—what will, per-

haps, impress me even more—that the sweeter and more enchanting they are, the more bountiful will Heaven be in rewarding a sacrifice so hard to make; but at least admit that, while human hearts beat in our bosoms, these same joys of love constitute the most perfect felicity we can know upon this earth!”

These concluding words of mine restored Tiberge’s good humor. He owned that my views were not altogether unreasonable, and advanced no objection to them beyond asking me why it was that I did not at least follow out my own principles, by sacrificing my love for the hope of that reward which, according to my conceptions of it, would be so great.

“Ah! my dear friend,” was my reply, “that is just where I recognize my own miserable weakness. Alas, yes! It is my duty to act in accordance with my reasoning; but to do so requires a strength I do not possess; and powerful, indeed, must be the aid which would make it possible for me to banish Manon’s charms from my memory!”

“Another of the Jansenist* brood, as I live!” exclaimed Tiberge.

“I do not know what I am,” was my reply; “nor is it very clear to me what one ought to be; but I am now ex-

* The heresies supposed to be contained in Cornelius Jansen’s book—the *Augustinus*—were collected by the Faculty of Theology of Paris in five *Propositions*, which were condemned by the Papal Bull of 31st May, 1653, and so gave rise to the celebrated controversy between the Jansenists and Jesuits, in which Pascal’s *Provincial Letters* played so notable a part. Tiberge alludes above to the first of these five propositions, which was to the following effect: “There are divine commandments which good men, although willing, are unable to obey; and the Grace by which these commandments are possible, is also wanting in them.”—TRANSLATOR.

perienicing only too profoundly the truth of that doctrine of theirs."

This conversation served, at all events, to revive my friend's compassion for me. He perceived that my laxity of morals was the outcome of weakness rather than of depravity, and this made him more willing in after days to render me assistance without which I should inevitably have perished in misery.

I did not, however, give him the least inkling of my design of escaping from St. Lazare. I merely asked him to undertake the delivery of my letter. I had prepared it



before he came, and found no lack of pretexts to lend color to my necessity for writing. He faithfully carried it to its address, and before the close of the day Lescaut received the one intended for him.

He came on the following day to see me, and was successful in passing himself off as my brother. My joy knew no bounds when I saw him enter my room. Carefully closing the door, I said to him: "Do not let us waste a moment. First give me some news of Manon, and then let me have your best advice as to how to shake off my fetters."

He assured me that he had not seen his sister since the day before my imprisonment. Only by dint of the most

diligent inquiry had he been able, he said, to ascertain her fate and my own; and he had presented himself at the *Hôpital* two or three times without being able to obtain permission to speak to her.

“Dearly will I make that villain G—— M—— pay for this!” exclaimed I.

“As to setting you free,” continued Lescaut, “that is a more difficult undertaking than you imagine. Two of my friends and I spent last evening examining the exterior of this establishment in every part, and we came to the conclusion that, your windows opening, as you mentioned in your letter, on a court-yard surrounded by buildings, it would be no easy task to get you out. You are, moreover, on the third story; and it would be quite impossible for us to smuggle either ropes or ladders in here. Nothing, therefore, can be accomplished from the outside, as far as I can see; and we must hit upon some scheme that can be carried into effect in the house itself.”

“No,” I replied; “I have considered everything, especially since the strictness of my confinement has been somewhat relaxed by the indulgence of the Superior. The door of my room is no longer kept locked, and I am at liberty to walk about the galleries used by the priests. All the stairways are cut off, however, by heavy doors which are kept carefully closed day and night, so that it is impossible for me to effect my escape by the exercise of ingenuity alone. But wait,” I added, after thinking for a moment over an idea which struck me as an excellent one; “could you bring me a pistol?”

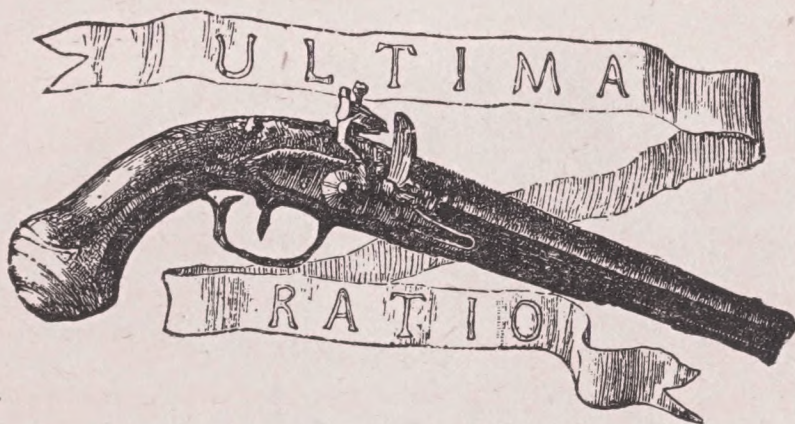
“Certainly,” replied Lescaut, “but do you mean to commit murder?”

I assured him that I had so little intention of killing any one that the pistol need not even be loaded. “Bring it to me to-morrow,” I continued, “and do not fail to be

opposite the entrance of this building, with two or three of our friends, at eleven o'clock to-morrow night. I hope to be able to join you there."

He urged me in vain to give him some further particulars of my project. I told him that an attempt such as the one I contemplated making could not but appear foolhardy until after it had succeeded. I begged him to shorten his visit in order that he might have less difficulty in obtaining permission to see me the next day.

He was admitted as readily as he had been on the first



occasion. The serious and dignified demeanor which he assumed would have made him pass anywhere for a person of the utmost respectability.

Once furnished with the instrument of my release, I scarcely felt any doubt as to the success of my scheme. It was a strange and audacious one; but what was I not capable of with the motives that inspired me?

Since I had been permitted to leave my room and walk about the galleries, I had noticed that every night the porter was in the habit of taking the keys of all the doors to the Superior, and that afterwards a profound silence reigned throughout the house, which showed that every one had retired to rest.

By passing through a gallery of communication I could go from my own room to the Superior's without en-

countering any obstacle. My plan was to take the keys from him, intimidating him with my pistol if he made any difficulty about surrendering them, and then to use them in gaining the street. I waited impatiently for the proper moment to arrive. The porter made his appearance at his usual time—a little after nine o'clock. I allowed another hour to pass in order to be sure that all the priests and servants were asleep, and then, taking my weapon and a lighted candle, I sallied forth.

I first knocked gently at the Superior's door, in order



to awaken him with as little noise as possible. He did not hear me until I had rapped a second time, and then, doubtless supposing it was one of the priests who had been taken ill and needed assistance, he rose to let me in. He took the precaution, however, of asking through the door who it was and what he was wanted for. I was obliged to give my name, but I did so in a tone of assumed distress, that he might think I was indisposed.

“Ah! it is you, my dear son!” said he, as he opened the door. “What brings you here at this late hour?”

I stepped into the room, and leading him to the other side of it, opposite the door, I told him that I found it ab-

solutely impossible to remain at St. Lazare any longer ; that the night was a favorable time for leaving it unobserved, and that I expected him, as my friend, to consent to open the doors for me, or to lend me the keys so that I might open them myself.

This polite suggestion naturally took him by surprise. He stood gazing at me blankly for some minutes without making any reply. As I had no time to lose, I went on to assure him hastily that, deeply as I appreciated all his kindness, liberty must be the first consideration with every man, especially with one who, like me, was unjustly de-



prived of it, and that I was resolved to regain mine that very night, at whatever cost. Fearing that it might occur to him to raise his voice and call for help, I showed him the unanswerable argument in favor of silence which I was holding concealed under my coat.

“A pistol !” he exclaimed ; “what, my son, do you intend to take my life in return for all the indulgence I have shown you ?”

“God forbid,” I replied ; “you are too prudent and reasonable to drive me to that necessity ; but I am determined to escape, and so fully am I resolved upon it that, if my purpose be defeated through any fault of yours, your fate is sealed !”

“But, my dear son,” he expostulated, pale and terrified, “what harm have I ever done you? Why should you wish to kill me?”

“Have I not already told you,” I answered impatiently, “that I have no design upon your life? If you wish to live, you have only to open the doors for me, and I shall be your friend forever after.”

Here I caught sight of the keys, which were lying on the table, and, seizing them, I told him to come with me,



and to make as little noise as possible. He was obliged to comply.

As he opened each of the doors that barred our progress, he sighed and repeated, “Ah, my son, my son! Who would ever have thought this of you?”

“Silence, good Father, not a sound!” I reiterated every few moments, on my side.

At last we came to a kind of barrier placed in front of the main entrance from the street. I fancied myself already free, and was standing behind the Superior with my candle in one hand and my pistol in the other.

While he was hurriedly removing the barrier, a servant who slept in a small room near by, hearing the rattling of the bolts, jumped out of bed and looked out of his door. The good Father, thinking, apparently, that this man

would be able to arrest my flight, ordered him, most imprudently, to come to his assistance. The fellow was a stalwart rascal, and threw himself upon me without a moment's hesitation. I did not stop to parley with him, but discharged my pistol full at his breast. "You are responsible for this, father," I said haughtily to my guide, "but you must finish your task, notwithstanding," I added, pushing him on towards the last door. He dared not refuse to open it, and I sprang out, free at last! A



few paces off I found Lescaut waiting for me with two friends, as he had promised.

We hurried away. Lescaut asked me whether he had not heard the report of a pistol.

"That was your fault," I replied, "why did you bring me a loaded one?"

I thanked him, nevertheless, for having taken that precaution—had it not been for which I should doubtless have remained at St. Lazare for many a day. We went to spend the night at a tavern, where I made up, to some extent, for the poor fare to which I had been accustomed for nearly three months. I could not give myself up to the full enjoyment of the moment, however, for I was tortured by the thought of what Manon might be suffering.

"We must rescue her!" I said to my three friends. "I

longed for my own liberty only with that object in view. You will, I am sure, bring all your ingenuity to my aid, while I, for my part, will devote my very life to the task."

Lescaut, who was not lacking in shrewdness and discretion, pointed out to me that we must act with great caution. My flight from St. Lazare, he said, and the unlucky offence I had committed while effecting my escape, would inevitably cause a public sensation; the Lieutenant-General of Police would institute a search for me, and his arm was a far-reaching one. In fine, unless I wished to run the risk of something even worse than St. Lazare, he thought it would be as well for me to remain in hiding within four walls for a few days, so that the first zeal of my enemies might have time to cool.

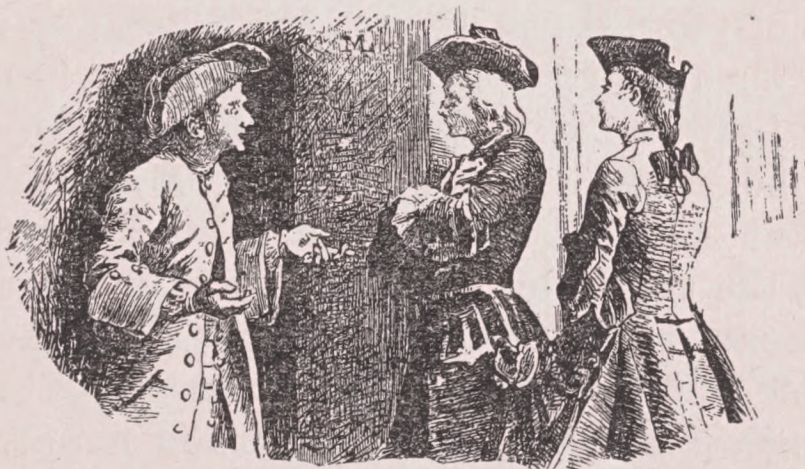
There was wisdom in his advice; but wisdom was also needed to follow it. So much circumspection and delay accorded but ill with my passion. I could stretch my compliance no further than to promise him that I would spend all the following day in bed. He locked me up in his room, where I remained until the evening.

Part of this time I occupied in devising projects and thinking out expedients for Manon's relief. I had every reason to believe that her prison was even more impenetrable than my own had been. Force and violence were out of the question; our only hope lay in stratagem, but the Goddess of Invention herself would have been at a loss how to begin.

I could find no solution of the problem, and postponed further consideration of it until after I had made some inquiries regarding the internal arrangements of the *Hôpital*.

CHAPTER XI.

No sooner had the return of night released me from my hiding-place, than I asked Lescaut to accompany me to the *Hôpital*. We entered into conversation with one of the porters, who seemed an intelligent fellow. Pretending



to be a foreigner who had heard much admiration expressed for the *Hôpital Général* and its excellent management, I questioned him concerning the minutest details; and, passing from one matter to another, we finally fell to talking about the Guardians, whose names and rank I asked him to tell me. His answers on this last point suggested an idea to my mind which I welcomed as a happy one; and I proceeded to put it into operation

without further delay. As an essential preliminary to my project, I inquired whether any of the gentlemen he had mentioned had children. He replied that he could not be certain about all of them, but he knew that M. de T——, one of the principal Guardians, had a son of marriageable age, who frequently came to the *Hôpital* with his father.

This information sufficed for my purpose, and I soon after brought the conversation to a close. On our way home I confided my newly conceived plan to Lescaut.

“I may fairly assume,” said I, “that this M. de T——’s son, who is rich and well-connected, has, in common with most young fellows of his age, more or less taste for pleasure. He is hardly likely to be a woman-hater, or such a milksop as to refuse his aid in a love affair. It is my design to enlist his interest in Manon’s release. If he be a man of honor and feeling, he will lend us his assistance out of pure generosity. Even if he cannot be influenced by such motives, he will, at all events, do something to help a beautiful girl, if only in the hope of obtaining a share of her favors. I mean to see him,” I added, “tomorrow, at the latest.” I drew a good omen from the fact that the very project afforded me great consolation. Even Lescaut admitted that my expectations were not unreasonable, and that we might allow ourselves to hope that something would come of my proposed attempt. I passed a more cheerful night in consequence.

The next morning I dressed myself as presentably as my poverty-stricken condition would admit, and drove in a hackney-coach to the residence of M. de T——. He was somewhat surprised at receiving a visit from a perfect stranger; but I augured well from his face and the courtesy of his manner.

I frankly explained my object in coming to see him, and, with a view of exciting in him an even warmer inter-

est than his natural feelings might have prompted, I dwelt upon the beauty of my mistress as unequalled, save, indeed, by the passion with which it inspired me.

He told me that, although he had never seen Manon, he had heard of her; if I alluded, at least, to the young woman who had been the mistress of old G—— M——. I at once surmised that he knew of my share in that transaction, and, in order to gain his sympathy more completely, by taking him into my confidence, and so establishing a claim upon him, I gave him a detailed account of all that had happened to Manon and myself.



“You see, sir,” continued I, “that the interests of my life and of my heart are now in your hands. Those of the one are no dearer to me than those of the other. I have confided in you without reserve, because I am no stranger to the generosity of your character, and because the fact of our being so nearly of the same age leads me to hope that there may also be some similarity in our tastes and inclinations.”

He appeared to be very much touched by these marks of trust and candor. His reply was that of a man possessing all the polish of good society, together with a delicacy of feeling which society does not always give, and

often destroys. He told me that he counted my visit among the fortunate events of his life—that he should regard my friendship as one of his most valued acquisitions, and would strive to merit it by his zeal in my service. He did not promise to restore Manon to me, as he could boast, he said, of only slight and uncertain influence; but he offered to procure me the pleasure of seeing her, and to do all in his power to bring her once more to my arms.

I was better pleased with this uncertainty on his part as to the extent of his influence than I should have been with a positive assurance that he would secure the fulfil-



ment of all my wishes. I discerned, in the very modesty of his promises, an indication of sincerity which delighted me. In a word, I allowed myself to hope for everything from his good offices on my behalf. His undertaking to obtain me an opportunity of seeing Manon would alone have made me his willing slave. I expressed these sentiments to him as best I could, and, in doing so, gave him every reason to believe that my character was not unworthy of his esteem. We embraced one another affectionately, and became fast friends, out of pure warmth of heart, and that natural inclination which prompts one man of ardent and generous temperament to attach himself to another of similar disposition.

He carried the evidences of his regard much further ; for, connecting my various adventures in his mind, and concluding that my flight from St. Lazare must have left me almost destitute of means, he offered me his purse, and pressed its acceptance upon me.

“Nay, sir,” I said, refusing it, “you are too good. If I am to owe the happiness of once more seeing my dear Manon to your kind and friendly assistance, you will have my life-long gratitude. If you restore that beloved being to me altogether, I shall feel that, though I were to shed my blood to the last drop in your service, I should still be in your debt.”

Before separating, we agreed upon the time and place of our next meeting. He was considerate enough not to prolong my suspense any further than he could help, and appointed that very afternoon. I waited for him at a *café*, where he rejoined me at about four o’clock, and we repaired together to the *Hôpital*.

My knees trembled under me as we crossed the courtyards. “Goddess of Love !” I inwardly ejaculated, “is it indeed true that I am once more to behold the idol of my soul, the object of so many tears and so much anguish of heart ? Then, Heaven, give me but strength to reach her side ; and after that dispose as you will of my fortunes and of my remaining days ; this one boon is all I ask of you !”

M. de T—— spoke to some of the door-keepers of the place, who showed every desire to be of use to him in any way that they could. He made them point out to him the part of the establishment in which Manon’s room was situated ; and we were conducted to it, our escort carrying a key of terrific size with which to unlock her door.

I asked the turnkey who accompanied us, and who was the one appointed to attend to her wants, how she had

passed her time since she had been in this place. He told us that she was as gentle as an angel, and that he had never had a harsh word from her. She had wept incessantly, he said, for the first six weeks after her arrival; but for some time back she had seemed more patient under her misfortune, and occupied herself in sewing from morning till night, with the exception of a few hours which she devoted to reading. I inquired, further, whether she had been properly supplied with food. He



assured me that the necessaries of life, at all events, had never been denied her.

As we approached her door, my heart began to throb violently; and I said to M. de T——:

“Pray go in by yourself and prepare her for my coming, for I fear that to see me thus suddenly and unexpectedly would give her too violent a shock.”

The door was opened for us. I remained outside in the corridor, near enough, however, to overhear every word that passed between them. M. de T—— told Manon that he had come in the hope of being able to offer her some consolation, as he was a friend of mine, and took a deep interest in our welfare. She inquired, with intense eagerness, whether he could tell her what had become of me.

He promised to bring me to her feet, as loving and as loyal as her heart could desire.

“How soon?”

“This very day. The happy moment is near at hand. You have but to express your wish, and your lover will stand before you.”

She needed no further explanation, but understood at once that I was at the door, and flew impetuously towards it as I entered. In a moment we were clasped in each other's arms and embracing one another with that lavish tenderness which, after a separation of three long



months, is such unspeakable bliss to all true lovers. Our sighs, our broken exclamations, the countless endearing names that fell from her lips and my own, and were repeated again and again with fond reiteration—such, for many minutes, were the elements of a scene which M. de T—— contemplated with unfeigned emotion.

“You fill me with envy,” he said, as he offered us seats. “I would resign the most glorious career that Fortune could offer me, to possess a mistress as lovely, as passionately devoted as yours.”

“And have I not, too, felt that all the power and glory the world could give were as nothing to the happiness of being loved by her?” was my reply.

I need scarcely say that the deepest tenderness charac-

terized all the remainder of an interview which had so long been the dearest wish of our hearts. My poor Manon gave me an account of all her adventures, and I related my own to her. We wept bitterly as we talked over her present situation and the one from which I had so recently escaped. M. de T—— consoled us by renewed promises that he would spare no endeavor to bring our troubles to an end. He advised us to make this first interview as short as possible, as he would then have less difficulty in procuring us others.

He found it no easy task to make us relish this advice.



Manon, especially, could not make up her mind to let me go. Again and again I rose, and again and again did she force me back into my chair.

“Alas!” she cried, as she strove to retain me by clinging to my coat and to my hands, “are you, then, going to leave me in this vile place? Who can say whether I shall ever see you again?”

M. de T—— assured her that he would bring me frequently to see her.

“As for the place,” he added, gallantly, “we must not think of it as the *Hôpital*, but as Versailles, since it holds within its precincts one who might fitly reign over the hearts of all mankind.”

As I went out I gave some money to the turnkey who was her attendant, in order to enlist his zeal in her service. This fellow was not so sordid and hardened as most of his class. He had witnessed our meeting, and that touching spectacle had excited his compassion; while a *louis d'or*, which I now handed him, won his complete devotion to my interests.

He took me aside as we were going down to the courtyard, and said:

“If you will take me into your service, sir, or give me a fair reward, to compensate me for the loss of my em-



ployment here, I think I can easily assist Miss Manon to escape.”

I lent an eager ear to this proposition, and, destitute as I was of means, I promised him far more than he expected, feeling persuaded that I should have no difficulty in satisfying a fellow of his stamp at any time.

“You may depend upon my doing all I can for you, my friend,” said I, “and may consider your fortune as well assured as my own.”

I then asked him how he intended to proceed.

“Simply by opening her door for her some evening,” he replied, “and showing her the way to the street entrance, where you must be waiting to receive her.”

I expressed my fear that she might be recognized in passing through the corridors and yards, and he admitted that there was some danger of that mishap occurring; but, he urged, we must of course be prepared to run a certain amount of risk.

Although I was delighted to find him so full of determination, I thought it only prudent to call M. de T—— and communicate the project to him, indicating, at the same time, the only element in it which seemed at all likely to render its success doubtful. He saw greater difficulties in the way of its accomplishment than had occurred to me. He did not, indeed, deny that Manon might succeed in effecting her escape in the manner suggested; “but,” he went on to say, “should she be recognized and arrested, while making good her flight, there would probably be no further hope for her. Moreover, you would have to leave Paris at once; for you could never hide yourself so effectually as to be out of reach of the search that would be made for you. The efforts of the authorities would be redoubled, both in your case and hers. A man by himself can easily elude pursuit, but to remain in concealment with a pretty woman is next door to impossible.”

Sound as this reasoning appeared to me, it failed to turn the scale in my mind against the hope of so speedily restoring Manon to liberty. I acknowledged this to M. de T——, and begged him to make some allowances for the imprudence and temerity natural to love; and I added that I had already determined to leave Paris and reside in some neighboring village, as I had done once before.

We accordingly arranged with the turnkey that his attempt should be deferred no longer than the following day; and in order to do all in our power to insure its success, we decided to bring with us some articles of male apparel,

with a view to facilitating our flight. It was no easy matter to smuggle them in; but I had enough fertility of invention to hit upon a method of doing so. Merely asking M. de T—— to wear two thin waistcoats the next day, one underneath the other, I undertook to answer for all the rest.

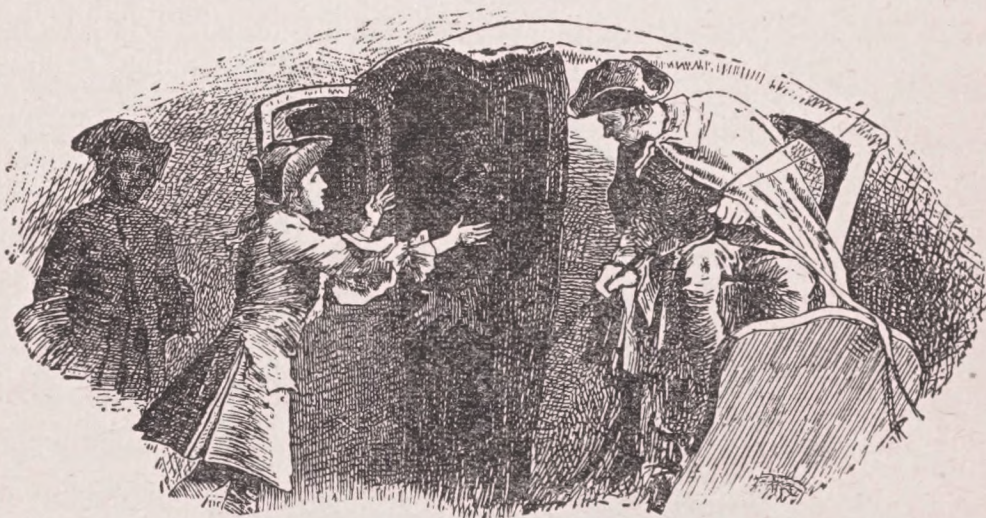
In the morning we returned to the *Hôpital*. I took with me some under-linen, a pair of stockings, etc., for Manon; and wore, over my coat, a *surtout*, which concealed the bulky appearance of my pockets. We remained in her room only a few minutes. M. de T—— left her one



of his waistcoats, while I gave her my coat—the *surtout* serving well enough for me to go away in. There was nothing lacking to complete her costume except a pair of breeches, which I had unluckily forgotten. The omission of these very necessary garments would doubtless have afforded us matter for laughter, had the embarrassment to which it put us been less serious. I was in despair to think that a trifle of this nature might result in the defeat of all our hopes. My determination was soon arrived at, however, and was no other than to make my exit without breeches, leaving my own behind me for Manon. My *surtout* was a long one, and, with the aid of a few pins, I put

myself in such trim as to be able to take my departure with decency.

The remainder of the day seemed to me intolerably long; but night came at last, and we took a coach and drove to within a short distance of the gates of the *Hôpital*. We had not waited there many minutes before Manon and her escort made their appearance. The door of our coach was open; they hurriedly leaped in, and I clasped my beloved mistress to my heart. She was trembling like a leaf.



“Where shall I drive?” asked the coachman.

“Drive to the uttermost ends of the earth!” cried I, “and carry me to some spot where I can never again be separated from Manon!”

This mad speech, which burst from me unawares, was well-nigh involving me in a troublesome predicament. The coachman pondered over my words, and when I proceeded to tell him the name of the street to which we wished to be driven, he replied that he was afraid I was involving him in a dangerous piece of business. He could see plainly enough, he said, that the handsome young person in man’s clothes, called Manon, was a girl whom I

was carrying off from the *Hôpital*; and he had no fancy for getting himself into trouble merely to oblige me.

The rascal's scruples were simply a pretence for extorting a higher price from me for his coach. We were in too close proximity to the *Hôpital* to make any altercation desirable.

"Hold your peace," said I, "and you will earn a *louis d'or*."

After that, he would have aided me to burn down the *Hôpital* itself had I asked him.

We drove to the house in which Lescaut lived. As the hour was late M. de T—— left us on the way, promising to come and see us the following day. The turnkey alone remained with us.

I held Manon clasped so closely in my arms that we occupied only the place of one in the coach. She was weeping from joy, and I felt my face moistened by her tears.

When we reached Lescaut's door and were about to alight, I had a fresh dispute with the coachman, the consequences of which were disastrous. I repented my promise of giving him a *louis*, not only because the sum was exorbitant, but for another and much weightier reason—my utter inability to pay it.

I sent for Lescaut, who came down from his room to the door. I told him in a whisper the plight that I was in. Being naturally hot-tempered, and by no means accustomed to waste much consideration upon a coachman, he replied that I must surely be in jest. "A *louis d'or*, indeed!" he exclaimed. "Trounce the fellow with your cane until he has his money's worth!" In vain did I expostulate with him in a low voice that he would be the undoing of us. He snatched my cane out of my hands, and was evidently about to lay it across the driver's shoulders, when

the latter, who, perchance, had been unlucky enough to fall into the hands of a Guardsman or Musketeer on previous occasions, made off, with his coach, frightened out of his wits, and shouting to me as he went that I had cheated him, but that I had not heard the last of him.

I called out to him several times to stop, but in vain. His flight caused me the gravest uneasiness, for I felt certain that he would go and notify the Commissary.

“You have ruined me,” I said to Lescaut; “it will be unsafe for me to remain in your house; we must leave this place at once.”

I gave my arm to Manon, and we hastened away from a street that was now so full of danger for us. Lescaut accompanied us.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE is something marvellous in the way in which Providence links one event with another. We had scarcely been walking for more than five or six minutes when a man, whose features I could not distinguish, recognized



Lescaut. He had evidently been searching for him in the neighborhood of his house, with the terrible purpose which he now carried into execution.

“Ah, Lescaut! 'Tis you!” said he, discharging his pistol at him. “You shall go and sup with the devil to-night!”

With these words he turned and fled. Lescaut fell to the ground lifeless.

I urged Manon to hasten away, for a dead man was beyond all need of aid from us, and I was in terror lest we should be arrested by the Watch, who would be sure to make their appearance before long. With her and the turnkey I turned into the first narrow street that crossed the one we were in. Manon was so completely prostrated by what had happened that it was with difficulty that I prevented her from falling. At last I saw a hackney carriage at the end of the street. We got into it; but when the driver asked me whither he should take us, I was at a loss for an answer. I knew of no secure place of refuge, and of no trusty friend to whom I should be safe in appeal-



ing. I was almost penniless, having barely more than half a *pistole* in my purse. Manon was so overcome with terror and fatigue that she was nearly swooning beside me. My imagination, moreover, was filled with the murder of Lescaut, and I was not yet free from apprehension regarding the Watch. What was to be done?

By a happy inspiration I thought of the inn at Chaillot, at which I had spent some days with Manon when we first went to make our home in that village. There I hoped we might not only find a safe retreat, but be able to live for some time without being pressed for payment.

“Drive to Chaillot,” I said to the coachman. He refused to go there at so late an hour for less than a *pis-*

tole—and I was again in a quandary. Finally we agreed upon six francs, which was all I had left in my purse.

On our way I did my best to console Manon, but, in my secret heart, I was overwhelmed with despair. I should have resolved upon suicide, had I not held in my arms the one treasure that made life worth living. This thought alone gave me courage.

“Come what may,” I said to myself, “I at least possess her now—she loves me—she is mine! Let Tiberge talk as he will; this is no mere delusive phantom of happiness. The rest of the universe might crumble to atoms before my eyes, and I should look unmoved upon the scene of destruction. And why? Simply because I am utterly indifferent to all else that it contains!”

Such were undoubtedly my actual sentiments; yet, even while setting such slight store on the goods of this world, I could not help realizing how necessary it was to possess some small share of them in order to regard all the rest with truly sovereign contempt. Love has a stronger hold on the heart than luxury, treasures, and wealth, but it cannot afford to despise their help; and nothing is more galling to a sensitive lover than to find that the lack of them is dragging him down, in spite of himself, to the level of the coarsest and most vulgar natures.

It was eleven o'clock when we reached Chaillot. We were welcomed at the inn as old acquaintances. No surprise was expressed at Manon's being in male attire, for in Paris and the surrounding neighborhood it is a common thing to see women in all sorts of disguises.

I had her wants supplied as liberally as though I commanded a well-filled purse. She was not aware of my penniless condition, and I took good care not to give her any inkling of it, as I had made up my mind to go back

to Paris the next day and endeavor to find some remedy for this most vexatious kind of ailment.

At supper I observed that Manon looked pale and thin. This had escaped my notice at the *Hôpital*, as the room in which I saw her was very dimly lighted. I asked her whether the whiteness of her cheeks was not a lingering result of the horror she had felt on seeing her brother murdered before her very eyes. She assured me that, deeply shocked as she had been by that awful event, her paleness was simply the effect of having undergone three months' separation from me.



“You love me very dearly, then?” I asked.

“A thousand times more dearly than I can express,” she responded.

“And you will never again desert me?”

“Never, while I live!” was her reply; and she confirmed this assurance by so many caresses and vows of constancy that it seemed indeed impossible that she could ever forget them.

I have always been convinced that she was sincere: what motive could she have had for carrying duplicity to such a length as this? But sincere though she was, she was still more fickle, nay, it became impossible to say *what*

she was—she did not know herself—when she beheld other women living in affluence, and found that she had to face poverty and want. I was on the eve of receiving a final proof of this fact, which was to eclipse all the former ones, and to result in the most surprising adventure that ever befell a man of my rank and fortune.

Knowing her disposition to be such as I have described I lost no time in starting for Paris on the morrow. The death of her brother, and the necessity of obtaining some linen and other clothes for her and myself, were such good reasons that I had no occasion to invent a pretext for going. I left the inn, telling Manon and the landlord that I



intended taking a hackney-coach ; but this, of course, was mere bravado on my part. As necessity compelled me to travel on foot, I walked very rapidly as far as the *Cours-la-Reine*, where I purposed resting for awhile. There was high need of my securing a few moments' solitude and quiet in order to collect my thoughts and to decide upon what I was to do in Paris. I seated myself upon the grass, and was soon immersed in a sea of reflections and speculations, which gradually grouped themselves under three main heads :

I had to obtain immediate assistance to enable me to provide for a host of present and pressing needs.

I had to settle upon a course of action that would, at

any rate, hold out some hope for the future ; and, though last, not least in importance, I had to make careful inquiries and take whatever measures might be necessary for insuring Manon's safety and my own.

After exhausting my ingenuity in thinking out plans and contrivances to meet these three principal requirements, I finally came to the conclusion that it would be as well to leave the latter two out of consideration for the time being. We were lodged comfortably enough in our room at Chaillot ; while, as for future necessities, I decided that it would be soon enough to think of them when I had provided for those of the moment.

The immediate question, then, was how to replenish my purse. M. de T—— had generously offered me his, but the idea of reminding him of the subject myself was extremely repugnant to me. Could there be anything more humiliating than to go and lay bare one's destitution to a stranger, and beg for charity from him ? To be capable of such an act one must have a soul so sordid as to prevent one's realizing the degradation it would involve, or possess a Christian humility which, by the very excess of its nobility, lifts one above any such sense of shame. As I, for my part, was neither devoid of all self-respect, nor, on the other hand, a good Christian, I would have sacrificed half the blood in my veins to escape such humiliation.

“ There is Tiberge, too,” I soliloquized ; “ he, good soul, would refuse me nothing that it was in his power to grant. My distress would touch him to the heart, I know ; but he would weary me to death with his moralizing. I should have to submit to his reproaches, his exhortations, and his warnings ; and in that way pay so dear a price for his assistance, that I would give the other half of my blood rather than expose myself to a scene so unpleasant in it-

self, and one which would be sure, moreover, to leave me full of agitation and remorse. "The conclusion, then, would seem to be," I continued, "that I must renounce all hope, since there is no third alternative open to me, and since I am so little inclined to adopt these two that I would rather shed half my blood than accept either one of them; all of it, that is to say, rather than accept them both."

"Yes," I added, after a moment's reflection, "I certainly would rather pour out my whole life's blood than stoop to abject begging. But what, pray, has my blood to do with the question? My present concern is to provide



for Manon—to insure the continuance of her love and fidelity. Where is the consideration that can outweigh her in my mind? None have ever yet done so. She is, to me, all that glory, happiness, and fortune are to other men!

"There are, doubtless, many things which I would lay down my life to gain or to avoid; but to value a thing more than my own life is no reason for prizing it as much as I do Manon."

This train of thought soon brought me to a decision. I rose and walked on, with the determination of first going to see Tiberge, and then M. de T——.

On reaching Paris, I took a hackney-carriage, in spite of the fact that I had no means of paying for it, trusting

entirely to my success in obtaining the assistance I was about to solicit. Driving to the *Luxembourg*, I sent word to Tiberge that I was awaiting him there. My impatience was gratified by the promptness with which he made his appearance. Without any waste of words, I told him of the extremity I was in. He asked me whether the hundred *pistoles* which I had repaid him would be sufficient to meet my wants, and then, without opposing a single word of objection, he hastened away to get them for me, with that ungrudging manner and that evident pleas-



ure in making a gift which are known only to love and to true friendship.

Although I had not entertained the slightest doubt of his complying with my request, I was surprised at obtaining what I asked so cheaply—that is to say, without being upbraided for my continued impenitence. But I was mistaken in supposing that I was to escape his reproaches altogether, for, when he had finished counting out the money to me, and I was about to leave him, he asked me to walk once or twice up and down the path with him. I had not mentioned Manon, and he was not aware that she was at liberty, so that his sermon had for its text only my rash flight from St. Lazare, and his own misgivings lest I should fail to profit by the virtuous

teachings which I had received there, and return to my vicious courses.

He told me that he had gone to pay me a visit at St. Lazare the day after my escape, and had been inexpressibly shocked to hear of the way in which I had left it. He had had a conversation on the subject with the Superior. That worthy Father had not as yet recovered from the effects of his fright; but he had, nevertheless, been generous enough to conceal the circumstances of my departure from the Lieutenant-General of Police, and had prevented the



death of the porter from being noised abroad. I had thus nothing to fear from that quarter, continued Tiberge, but he added, if I had not lost all sense of rectitude, I would take advantage of the happy turn which Providence had given to my affairs, and begin a new life by writing to my father and effecting a reconciliation with him. He concluded by saying that, if I would for once be governed by his advice, he was of opinion that my wisest course would be to leave Paris and return to the bosom of my family.

I heard him patiently to the end. There was a great deal in what he said that gave me no little satisfaction. I was delighted, in the first place, to find that I need have no fears as far as St. Lazare was concerned. This made the streets of Paris free ground for me again. In the sec-

ond place, I congratulated myself on the fact that Tiberge had not the vaguest suspicion of Manon's escape and of her being with me once more. I even noticed that he had avoided mentioning her to me, under the impression, evidently, that she had lost her former hold on my heart, as I displayed so little anxiety regarding her.

I resolved, if not to go home to my family, at least to follow Tiberge's advice so far as to write to my father, and intimate to him that I was anxious to return to the path of duty and of obedience to his wishes. My hope was that I might be able to induce him to send me some money, by pretending that I required it in order to complete my course of study at the Academy ; for I knew that it would be useless for me to try to make him believe that I had any inclination to re-enter the Church. At bottom, moreover, I was by no means indisposed to keep the promise I intended making him. I was glad, on the contrary, to see any prospect of occupying myself in some honorable and rational manner, as far as I could do so without prejudice to my love.

The plan I had in contemplation was to live with my mistress and to pursue my studies at the same time ; the two were perfectly compatible. I was so well satisfied with all these projects that I promised Tiberge that I would despatch a letter to my father that very day ; and, in fact, I had no sooner left him than I went into a public writing-office * and composed such an affectionate and dutiful epistle that, on reading it over, I flattered myself that the paternal heart would be unable to resist my appeal.

Although, on leaving Tiberge, I could have well afforded to hire a coach, and pay for it, I took pleasure in walking proudly through the streets to M. de T——'s

* Bureau d'écriture.

house. I enjoyed a sense of delight in this exercise of my new-found liberty, which, as my friend had assured me, there was now no further danger of my losing. It suddenly occurred to me, however, that his assurances referred only to St. Lazare, and that, besides this, I had the affair of the *Hôpital* still to answer for, not to mention the murder of Lescaut, in which I was concerned, if only as a witness. The recollection of these circumstances so terrified me that I retreated into the nearest alley-way, and sent for a coach, in which I drove straight to M. de T——'s. He laughed heartily at my fright,



and, indeed, I could not help smiling at it myself, when he informed me that there were no unpleasant consequences to be apprehended either from the *Hôpital* adventure or Lescaut's death. He told me that, thinking he might be suspected of having taken part in Manon's abduction, he had gone to the *Hôpital* that morning and asked to see her—pretending to know nothing of what had happened. So far from accusing either him or myself of any complicity in the affair, the authorities at the *Hôpital* had eagerly related the whole occurrence to him, as an extraordinary piece of news; and had expressed their astonishment that such a pretty girl as Manon should

have condescended to run away with a turnkey. He had merely remarked, indifferently, that he was not surprised at it, as people would do anything for the sake of liberty.

M. de T—— went on to relate that he had then gone to Lescaut's lodgings, in the hope of finding me there with my charming mistress. The landlord of the house, who was a coach-builder, declared that he had seen nothing of either Manon or myself, adding that if we had been looking for Lescaut it was no wonder we had not been to his house, as we must doubtless have heard of his having been murdered at about the very time in question ; whereupon he



had willingly proceeded to give all the particulars he knew regarding the cause and circumstances of Lescaut's death.

It seemed that, about two hours earlier in the evening, one of Lescaut's friends—a Guardsman—had gone to see him, and had proposed a game of cards. Lescaut had won so rapidly that within an hour the other had parted with a hundred crowns—in other words, with all the money he possessed. The unfortunate fellow, finding himself penniless, had begged Lescaut to lend him half the sum which he had lost. This had given rise to some dispute, the upshot of which was a violent quarrel between them. Lescaut

refused to go out and settle it at the point of the sword, and the other left him, swearing to shoot him down like a dog when they met again—a threat which he had carried out that very evening. M. de T—— had the courtesy to add that he had felt much uneasiness on our account, and that I must continue to count upon his serving me in any way that he could. I did not hesitate to inform him of our place of retreat. He begged that I would permit him to go and take supper with us.

As I had nothing further to attend to, beyond obtaining some dresses and linen for Manon, I told him that we



might start at once, if he would have the goodness to stop with me for a few moments at one or two shops. I do not know whether he thought that I made this proposition with a view to exciting his generosity, or whether it was simply from the impulse of a noble heart; but, having consented to set out immediately, he took me to the shops at which his family dealt, and insisted on my selecting several much more costly stuffs than it had been my intention to buy; and when I was about to pay for them, he forbade the shop-keepers, in the most positive terms, to accept a penny from me.

This kindly act was performed with such good grace,

that I felt I might profit by it without a blush. We then started together for Chaillot, where I arrived in a less anxious frame of mind than I had been in on leaving there that morning.

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As the above narrative had occupied the Chevalier des Grieux more than an hour in the telling, I begged him to pause awhile for rest, and to favor us with his company at supper. Our close attention gave him every reason to believe that we had listened to him with pleasure. He assured us that we should find the sequel of his story even more interesting; and, as soon as we had finished supper, he continued as follows.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

THE STORY OF MANON LESCAUT.

PART SECOND.



CHAPTER XIII.

My presence and the courteous attentions of Monsieur de T—— soon dissipated any lingering sadness that Manon may have felt.

“Let us forget all our past troubles, dear heart,” I said to her on my return, “and begin a new life of greater happiness than we have ever known. Love is a kind master, after all. The pleasures which he gives us more than outweigh all the trials that Fortune can send.”

Our supper was a scene of perfect joy. I was prouder and happier with Manon and my hundred *pistoles* than the richest Partisan* of Paris amid his heaps of gold.

The true way in which to estimate our wealth is by the means we possess of gratifying our desires. I had not one that was unsatisfied. Even the future gave me little anxiety. I felt almost sure that my father would make no difficulty about giving me money enough to live comfortably at Paris, as, being then in my twentieth year, I

*Partisan: a farmer of taxes.—TRANSLATOR.

would soon be entitled to claim my share of my mother's property. I did not hide from Manon the fact that one hundred *pistoles* formed the whole of my present capital. This was enough to enable me to wait with an easy mind for some addition to my means, which there seemed every prospect of my obtaining, either by right of inheritance, or from the resources of the card-table.

Thus, for the first few weeks, I gave myself up to the enjoyment of my situation. A controlling sense of honor, as well as a lingering dread of the police, led me to defer from day to day the renewal of my relations with the fraternity of the *Hôtel de Transylvanie*, and I contented myself with playing in some assemblies of less unenviable notoriety, where Fortune so favored me as to spare me the humiliation of resorting to the tricks of the sharper.

I spent part of every afternoon in town, returning to Chaillot for supper, very often accompanied by M. de T——, whose friendship for us grew warmer every day. Manon found distractions which prevented the hours from hanging heavily on her hands. She made the acquaintance of several young women in the neighborhood, whom the arrival of spring had attracted to the village; and, what between walks and the various little diversions of their sex, they beguiled the time pleasantly enough.

They made up a party at cards, playing always for limited stakes, and devoting the winnings to defray the expense of hiring a coach. They drove out daily to enjoy the air in the Bois de Boulogne, and, on my return of an evening, I always found Manon lovelier, happier, and more devoted than ever.

Some clouds arose, however, which seemed to lower threateningly over the fabric of my happiness. But they were quickly dispelled; and the upshot of the affair was rendered so comical by Manon's frolicsome humor, that I

still recur with pleasure to a recollection which brings her once more before me with all her tenderness and all the charming sprightliness of her disposition.

Our valet (the only servant we had) took me aside one day and told me, with an air of great embarrassment, that he had an important secret to impart to me. I encouraged him to speak out freely. After some beating about the bush, he gave me to understand that there was a certain foreigner of rank who seemed to have become deeply enamoured of Miss Manon.



I felt the blood go boiling through every vein in my body.

“Does she return his passion?” I asked sharply, forgetting all considerations of prudence in my anxiety to learn the truth at once.

My sudden display of temper disconcerted the man; he replied uneasily that he had not carried his observations far enough to be able to answer that question. He had noticed, however, for some days past, that this foreigner made a habit of coming regularly to the Bois de Boulogne, where, alighting from his carriage, he would roam about alone among the by-paths, apparently watching for an opportunity of catching a glimpse of Miss Manon or of

meeting her. This had led him to strike up an acquaintance with the stranger's servants, in order to find out from them who their master was. They had given him to understand that he was an Italian Prince, and that they suspected him themselves of being engaged in some gallant adventure. This, added the valet, nervously, was all he had been able to learn, as the Prince had sauntered out from under the trees at that moment, and accosting him pleasantly, had asked him his name, and then, as if guessing him to be in our service, had congratulated him on being employed by so charming a lady.

I waited impatiently to hear the rest of his story; but he came to a stop, with some timid excuses, which I attributed merely to my imprudent exhibition of temper. I urged him in vain to continue and to conceal nothing from me. He protested that he knew no more, saying that, as all he had just told me had occurred only the day before, he had not yet had another opportunity of seeing the Prince's servants.

In order to reassure him, I not only praised him for what he had done, but rewarded him liberally; and then, without allowing him to suppose that I entertained the slightest suspicion of Manon, I instructed him, in a calmer tone, to keep a watch on all the foreigner's proceedings.

In reality, the fellow's timidity left me a prey to the cruellest uncertainty, for I was afraid that it might have led him to suppress part of the truth. However, after some reflection, I recovered from my alarm sufficiently to regret that I had yielded to such weakness. I could not justly blame Manon for the fact that some one had chosen to fall in love with her. According to all appearance she was herself ignorant of the conquest she had made; and what was my life to become if I were so readily to open my heart to the inroads of jealousy?

I went back to Paris the next day without having formed any other resolution than that of hastening the advancement of my fortunes by playing for higher stakes, so that I might be in a position to leave Chaillot the moment I saw any cause for uneasiness. That evening I heard nothing to disturb my peace of mind. The foreign Prince had again made his appearance in the Bois de Boulogne, and, on the strength of the previous day's occurrences, had once more drawn my informant into conversation. He had alluded to his passion, but in terms which



did not presuppose any understanding with Manon, and had questioned the man closely on a number of points. Finally, he had endeavored to buy him over to his interests by promises of rich reward; and, drawing from his pocket a letter which he had in readiness for the occasion, he had offered him several *louis d'or* to place it in his mistress's hands—but in vain.

Two days went by without any further incident. The third was more stormy. On returning from town somewhat later than usual, I learned that, while out walking, Manon had separated herself from her companions for a few moments. The stranger, who was following close behind her, had approached, in obedience to a sign from her,

and she had handed him a letter, which he had received with every evidence of delight. The only expression of his feelings which he had had time to give was to press the lines amorously to his lips, as she had at once hastened away from him. But she had been in unusually high spirits all the rest of the day; nor had this mood deserted her since her return to the house.

I shuddered, not doubting a word of my valet's story.

"Are you quite sure," I asked him sadly, "that your eyes were not deceiving you?"



He appealed to Heaven to confirm the truth of what he had told me.

There is no saying what I might not have done in the anguish of my heart, had not Manon heard me at the door and run impatiently to meet me, and reproach me for my tardiness. Without waiting for my reply, she loaded me with caresses, and, as soon as we were alone together, upbraided me sharply for having fallen into the habit of returning home so late.

My silence leaving her free to continue, she told me that for three weeks I had not spent one whole day with her, and that she could not bear these long absences of mine. She begged me to devote to her at least one day every

now and again; and added that on the morrow, to begin with, she wished to have me with her from morning to night.

“And I shall be, you may depend upon it,” answered I, morosely enough.

She did not appear to notice my ill-humor; and, in the exuberance of her delight, which struck me as unusually lively, even for her, she gave me a series of amusing descriptions of how she had passed the day.

“Strange girl!” I muttered to myself; “what am I to expect from this prelude?”

The circumstances of our first separation recurred to my mind; but I thought that, behind all her gayety and caresses, there was to be detected a certain tone of sincerity which accorded well with the indications of her manner.

I readily accounted for my dejection, which I could not banish all through our supper, by attributing it to heavy losses which, I told her, I had been unlucky enough to suffer at play.

I regarded it as a circumstance very much in my favor that the idea of my remaining at Chaillot the following day had been suggested by Manon herself. I thus gained time for deliberation.

The fact that I should be on the spot relieved me of all fears for the morrow; and I had already made up my mind that, if I saw nothing to necessitate my making my discoveries known, I would the next day remove my whole establishment to town, and to a quarter where I should be safe from the intrusion of meddlesome princes. Thanks to this arrangement, I passed a comparatively peaceful night; but it did not save me from the pain I could not but feel at having reason to fear a fresh instance of inconstancy on the part of my mistress.

When I awoke, Manon declared that though the day was to be passed in our lodgings, she by no means intended that I should make that an excuse for a careless toilet; and she added that she meant to dress my hair with her own hands. I boasted a fine head of hair; and this was an amusement in which she had more than once indulged. On this occasion, however, she devoted more care to the task than I had ever seen her take before.

To gratify her I was obliged to seat myself before her dressing-table and to submit to all the little embellish-



ments which her fancy devised for my adornment. During the progress of her work, she would every now and again make me turn my face towards her, and, resting her hands upon my shoulders, subject me to an eager scrutiny. Then—expressing her satisfaction by one or two kisses—she would make me resume my former position, and would proceed with her task. This diversion kept us pleasantly engaged until dinner-time. Her delight in it seemed so unaffected, and her gayety so free from simulation, that, unable to reconcile such appearances of constancy with the project of a base betrayal on her part, I was more than once tempted to unbosom myself to her, and relieve my mind of a burden which was beginning to weigh very heavily upon it. But I indulged the hope, as

moment after moment went by, that the avowal would come from her own lips; and I revelled by anticipation in the exquisite sense of triumph that would then be mine.

We went back to her dressing-room, where she was putting the finishing touches to my hair, and I was good-humoredly yielding to her every whim, when the servant came to announce that the Prince of ——— desired to see her. The mention of that name threw me into a violent rage.

“What does this mean?” I cried, thrusting her from me. “Who and what is this Prince?”



She made no response to my questions, but said coolly to the valet: “Show him upstairs.” Then she turned to me and added in a bewitching tone, “My own dear love, bear with me for one moment, I beg of you—for just one single moment! Do but consent and I will love you a thousandfold more than ever. Grant me this favor, and you shall have my lifelong gratitude!”

I was speechless with surprise and indignation. She renewed her entreaties, and I was casting about for fitting words of scorn with which to reject them, when, hearing the door of the outer room thrown open, she seized my hair—which was hanging loosely over my shoulders—in one hand, took her looking-glass in the other, and, exerting her whole strength in the effort, dragged me, just as

I was, to the door of the dressing-room, which she pushed open with her knee, and thus presented me to the stranger, whom the noise, apparently, had brought to a stand-still in the middle of the room, a spectacle which must have caused him no little astonishment.

The man I saw before me was very richly dressed, but had a decidedly ill-favored face. Notwithstanding his embarrassment at the scene I have just described, he made a profound bow, but Manon did not allow him time to open his lips. Holding her looking-glass before his face, she said to him :



“There, sir, take a good look at yourself, and do me justice. You ask me for my love. *Here* is the man whom I love, and have sworn to love all my life. Make the comparison for yourself. If you think to rival him in my heart, pray tell me on what grounds; for I beg to assure you that, in the eyes of your humble servant, all the Princes of Italy together are not worth a single one of the hairs which I am now holding in my hand !”

During this madcap speech, which was evidently premeditated on her part, I was vainly struggling to free myself, for the sight of a man of his rank in such a position excited my compassion, and I was anxious to atone for this petty insult by my own courteous apologies.

But, quickly recovering his self-possession, he banished any such inclination from my mind by the coarseness of his retort.

“Yes, mademoiselle,” he said to Manon, with a forced smile; “my eyes have indeed been opened, and I find that you are much less of a novice than I had supposed.”

Then, without favoring her with so much as a glance, he turned and left the room, adding in an undertone as he went out, that French women were no better than Italian. Under the circumstances I was not at all anxious to convert him to a higher opinion of the fair sex.

Releasing my hair from her grasp, Manon threw her-



self into an arm-chair, and made the room re-echo with peal after peal of laughter. I did not attempt to conceal how deeply I was touched by a sacrifice which I could ascribe only to the promptings of her affection for me. Yet I felt that the jest had been carried too far, and expressed my disapproval of it. She then told me the whole tale, how my rival had laid siege to her for several days in the Bois de Boulogne, ogling and simpering at her until it was impossible for her to mistake the nature of his sentiments; how, at last, he had gone so far as to send her an open declaration of his passion, with his name and all his titles duly set forth, in a letter, the delivery of which he had entrusted to the coachman who drove her and her companions on their daily outings. In this epistle

he had made her dazzling promises of wealth and of life-long devotion on his part, if she would follow him to his home beyond the Alps. She had come back to Chaillot, she said, fully determined to inform me of the whole adventure; but it had occurred to her that we might derive some amusement from the affair; and this fancy afforded such irresistible attraction to her mind that she had replied very graciously to the Italian prince's letter, and granted him permission to pay her a visit. She had enjoyed the further diversion, she added, of making me fall in with the plot without allowing me to have the remotest suspicion of what was going on.

I said nothing about the enlightenment I had obtained from another source; and, intoxicated as I was by this triumph of love, I heartily applauded all that she had done.

CHAPTER XIV.

THROUGHOUT my life I have observed that Providence has invariably selected those periods when my fortunes have apparently been established on the firmest of foundations, to inflict its severest chastisements upon me. With M. de T——'s friendship and Manon's affection, my cup of happiness seemed so full, that no one could have persuaded me that there was any fresh misfortune in store for me. Yet there was one impending at that moment so disastrous in its consequences that it reduced me to the condition in which you saw me at Passy, and eventually to such deplorable extremities that you will find it difficult as you hear them to believe in the truth of my story.

One evening M. de T—— was supping with us, when we heard a coach rattle up to the door of the inn, and stop. Our curiosity was excited as to who could be arriving at that late hour. Upon inquiry we found that it was young Monsieur de G—— M——; no other, in fact, than the son of our cruellest enemy, the old voluptuary who had incarcerated me at Saint Lazare, and sent Manon to the *Hôpital*. I flushed with anger as I heard his name.

“A just Heaven has brought him here,” I said to M. de

T——, “that I may punish him for his father’s villainy! He shall not escape me until we have measured swords together!”

M. de T——, who knew him, and who, indeed, was one of his most intimate friends, endeavored to inspire me with more amicable sentiments towards him. He assured me that he was a young man of exceedingly amiable character; and so far from being capable of having taken any share in his father’s proceedings, that even I, were I to be in his company for a few minutes, could not fail to accord him my esteem and to desire that he should give me his.



After adding a great deal more in his favor, M. de T—— begged that I would permit him to go and invite his friend to join us, and to partake of what was left of our supper. He met the objection as to the risk to which we should be exposing Manon in making her whereabouts known to our enemy’s son, by protesting on his faith and honor that when once young G—— M—— knew us, we should have no more zealous champion than he. In the face of such positive assurances I made no further difficulty. Before bringing him to us, M. de T—— had a few minutes’ conversation with him in private, and told him who we were. His manner on entering the room certainly prepossessed us in his favor.

After exchanging salutations, we sat down. He was eloquent in his admiration of Manon, of myself, and of everything belonging to us; and he ate with an appetite that did honor to our supper. As soon as the table was cleared, the conversation took a more serious turn. With downcast eyes, he spoke of his father's cruel behavior towards us, and expressed the deepest regret for all that we had suffered at his hands.

“If I do not prolong my apologies,” said he, “I beg you to believe that it is only because I am loath to revive a recollection which is fraught with so much humiliation for myself.”

However sincere his contrition may have been at first, it became much more so as the evening wore on; for he had not been with us half an hour before I began to perceive the impression which Manon's charms were making upon him. His glances and his manner towards her gradually grew more and more tender; although, during the whole conversation, he did not betray his sentiments by a word. But, even without any aid from jealousy, I was too well versed in the ways of love to be blind to the most trivial indications arising from that source.

Young G—— M—— remained in our company until late in the evening, and before taking his leave, he told us that he congratulated himself upon his good fortune in making our acquaintance, and hoped that we would permit him to come and see us occasionally, so that he might have more than one opportunity of assuring us of his desire to serve us in any way in his power. He left in the morning, taking M. de T—— in his coach with him.

As I have already remarked, I felt no inclination to be jealous. I trusted to Manon's vows with more credulity than ever. Such absolute dominion did that lovely being hold over my heart that I had not a trace of any other

feelings than those of esteem and affection toward her. So far from blaming her for having fascinated young G—— M——, I was pleased beyond measure at the effect of her charms; and plumed myself upon being loved by a girl who was the admiration of all who beheld her. I did not even think it worth while to confide my suspicions to her.

For some days after this we were busily engaged in putting her wardrobe in order, and in discussing the question of whether we might venture to go to the *Comédie* without fear of being recognized. M. de T—— paid us



another visit before the end of the week, and we consulted him in the matter. He saw that Manon's heart was set upon going, and that nothing would please her but that he should say "yes." So we decided to go with him that very evening. Our decision was not destined to be carried into effect, however, for M. de T—— drew me aside a moment afterwards, and said:

"I have been in the deepest perplexity since I last saw you, and my visit to you to-day is one result of it. G—— M—— has fallen in love with your mistress, and has confided his passion to me. I am his bosom friend, and ready to do him any service he may ask; but I am no less a friend of yours. His intentions appearing to me dishonor-

able, I expressed my strong disapprobation of them. I should have kept his secret for him, had it been his design to employ only the ordinary methods of winning a lady's favor, but he has an accurate knowledge of Manon's peculiar character, having discovered—by what means I cannot say—her fondness for wealth and pleasure; and, as he is already in the enjoyment of a considerable fortune, he means, he informed me, to begin by tempting her with a very handsome present, and the offer of an allowance of ten thousand francs.

“Had all things been equal, it might have cost me, per-



haps, a much greater struggle to betray his confidence; but considerations of justice as well as of friendship decided me in your favor; especially as, having been the imprudent cause of his passion, by introducing him here, I felt that it lay upon me to avert any ill-consequences of the mischief I have occasioned.”

I thanked M. de T—— for rendering me so important a service; and, returning his confidence unreservedly, I owned that Manon's character was such as G—— M—— supposed it to be; that is to say, that she could not endure the very mention of poverty.

“However,” I said, “when it is merely a question of more or less, I do not think her capable of deserting me

for another. I am in a position to see that she wants for nothing, and I have every reason to believe that my fortunes will improve from day to day. There is but one thing I fear," I added, "and that is that G—— M—— may avail himself of his knowledge of our whereabouts to do us some ill-turn."

M. de T—— assured me that I need be under no apprehension on that score. G—— M——, he said, was capable of any folly in the name of love, but not of an act of baseness. "Were he to stoop so low as to commit one," continued M. de T——, "I would myself be the first to punish him for it, and so atone for my unfortunate share in occasioning it."

"I am obliged to you for this kind expression of your feeling," I replied, "but the mischief would have been done, and the remedy would be of doubtful benefit to us. I think, therefore, that our wisest plan is to avoid any such trouble by leaving Chaillot and taking up our residence elsewhere."

"No doubt," responded my friend; "but you will be hard put to it to get away as speedily as the circumstances require; for G—— M—— is to be here by noon to-day. He told me so yesterday, and that was my reason for coming at such an early hour to apprise you of his intentions. He may arrive at any moment."

With such short warning, the case became urgent, and forced me to consider it in a more serious light. To escape G—— M——'s visit was manifestly impossible; and it would doubtless be no less impossible for me to prevent his declaring his passion to Manon. In this dilemma, I decided to put her on her guard myself against the designs of this new rival. I imagined that if she knew me to be aware of the proposals which he was about to make to her, and received them under my very eyes, she would have

sufficient strength of mind to reject them. I confided my thoughts to M. de T——, who expressed his opinion that it would be an extremely delicate matter to manage successfully.

“I do not deny that it will be,” said I; “but no man could have more reasons for being sure of his mistress than I have for relying on the affection of mine. If she could be tempted at all, it would be because she was dazzled by the splendor of the offers made to her; and, as I have already told you, she is not of a mercenary nature. She loves her comfort; but she loves me too; and while



my affairs are in as prosperous a condition as they are at present, I cannot believe that she would choose the son of a man who had her immured in the *Hôpital*, in preference to myself.”

In short, I adhered to my original purpose, and, drawing Manon aside, frankly told her all that I had just learned.

She thanked me for my good opinion of her, and promised me that she would receive G—— M——’s proposals in a fashion that would leave him no desire to renew them in the future.

“No,” said I, “it will not do to anger him by an affront. It lies in his power to injure us. But, you sweet rogue,” I added, with a laugh, “you know well enough

how to rid yourself of an unacceptable or importunate lover."

After musing for a few moments, she exclaimed :

"I have it. I have thought of an admirable plan, and I am quite proud of my ingenuity. G—— M——, you see, is the son of our bitterest enemy. We must be revenged on the father, not, indeed, through the son himself, but through the son's purse. What I mean to do is to listen to his proposals, accept his presents, and then leave him in the lurch."

"A pretty enough project, doubtless," I said, "but you



seem to forget, my poor girl, that this is the very same road which led us straight to the *Hôpital*."

In vain did I point out to her the danger of doing as she proposed. She insisted that it would be only necessary for us to play our cards well ; and found a ready answer to every objection that I urged.

Show me the lover who does not blindly humor every caprice in the woman he adores, and I will admit that I was to blame in yielding so readily. However that may be, it was agreed between us that G—— M—— should be made our dupe ; whereas, by a strange turn of fate, I became his instead.

His coach drew up at the door at about eleven o'clock.

He apologized gracefully for the liberty he was taking in inviting himself to dine with us; and expressed no surprise on seeing M. de T——, who, in fact, had promised him the day before that he would be present, and had only avoided coming in the same coach with him by excusing himself under pretext of having some business to attend to.

In spite of the fact that we were one and all harboring treachery in our hearts, we took our places at the table with every appearance of mutual confidence and good-will. G—— M—— easily found an opportunity of declaring his



sentiments to Manon. He had no reason to think me anything but complaisant, as I purposely left the room for some little time. I could see, when I returned, that his suit had not been received with such severe disfavor as to drive him to despair. On the contrary, he was in the best of humors, and I affected to be in equally high spirits. He, of course, was laughing in his sleeve at my simplicity, and I at his. Each of us was a most diverting spectacle for the other during the whole of that afternoon. Before he left, I again contrived to allow him a few moments' private conversation with Manon; so that he had every cause to congratulate himself upon my accommodating disposition, as well as on the good cheer he had enjoyed.

No sooner had he stepped into his coach with M. de T——, than Manon ran with open arms towards me, and catching me in her embrace, gave vent to her mirth in peals of laughter. She repeated to me, word for word, all the speeches and proposals he had favored her with. The upshot of them was this: He adored her; he desired to share with her the income of forty thousand *livres* which he was now enjoying, not to speak of his expectations after his father's death; she was to be mistress of his heart and fortune, and, as an earnest of his bounty, he was ready at once to give her a coach, a furnished house, a maid, three footmen, and a cook.

“Here is a son, it must be owned, whose ideas of generosity are very different from his father's,” I said to Manon; “but, to be candid with me,” I added, “are you not tempted by these offers?”

“I?” she responded, adapting two verses of Racine's to express her thought:

* “I! capable of perfidy so base?
I! willing to behold that hated face,
Which, whene'er forced on my reluctant view,
Doth mem'ries of the *Hôpital* renew?”

“No,” I went on, continuing the parody:

“The *Hôpital* was scarce Love's shaft, to trace
Upon your heart the image of his face.

* “Moi! vous me soupçonnez de cette perfidie?
Moi! je pourrais souffrir un visage odieux
Qui rappelle toujours l' *Hôpital* à mes yeux?”

.

“J'aurais peine à penser que l'*Hôpital*, Madame,
Fût un trait dont l'Amour l'eût gravé dans votre âme.”

The pun on the word *trait* is almost untranslatable.—TR.

Yet a furnished house, with a coach and three lackeys, is an arrow feathered with great seductions, and Cupid has few as strong in all his quiver."

She protested that I had possession of her heart forever, and that no image but my own should ever be graven upon it.

"The promises he made me," she said, "are goads to vengeance, rather than shafts of love."

I asked her whether she intended to accept the house and coach. She replied that his money was all that she had designs upon. The difficulty was to get possession of



the one without the others. We decided to await the full disclosure of G—— M——'s plans, which he was to make in a letter he had promised to write her. It was duly delivered to her the next day by a footman out of livery, who managed very adroitly to procure an opportunity of speaking to her unobserved. Telling him to wait for an answer, she brought the letter to me at once, and we opened it together.

In addition to the usual tender commonplaces, it contained my rival's promises set forth in full detail. He lavished his wealth with no niggard hand, pledging himself to count down to her ten thousand francs upon her taking possession of the house, and to make up that sum as fast as

it was spent, so that she should always have it available in ready money. Her installation was not to be long delayed. He only asked her for two days in which to make the necessary preparations, and gave her the address of the house, promising to be there to meet her on the afternoon of the second day following, if she could succeed in giving me the slip.

This last was the only point as to which he begged her to set his mind at rest. He seemed to be quite sure of everything else, but he added that if she anticipated any



difficulty in eluding my vigilance, he would find some mean of facilitating her escape.

G—— M—— was more wary than his father; he evidently meant to have his prey securely in his grasp before he loosened his purse-strings.

We held a consultation as to the course Manon should pursue. I endeavored once more to dissuade her from carrying out her project, but nothing could shake her purpose.

She wrote a short reply to G—— M——, assuring him that she would have no difficulty in getting to Paris on the day he named, and that he might expect her without fail. We then arranged that I should start out at once to engage new lodgings in some village on the other side

of Paris, taking with me such few belongings as we had ; and that early the following afternoon—which was the time appointed for their meeting—she would go into town, where, after receiving the presents from G—— M——, she was to beg him as a special favor to take her to the *Comédie*. She was to carry to the theatre as much of the money as she could secrete about her person, entrusting the rest to our valet, whom she intended to have with her. He was the same man who had assisted her to escape from the *Hôpital*, and was devotedly attached to us.

I was to be at the end of the *Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs* with a hackney-coach, and, at about seven o'clock, was to leave it waiting there and make my way, under cover of the darkness, to the entrance of the *Comédie*. Manon promised to find some pretext for leaving her box for a few moments, and to seize the opportunity to come down and join me. The rest would be easy to manage. In an instant we should have leaped into the coach, and would be hurrying out of Paris by way of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, which would take us in the direction of our new lodgings.

Wildly impracticable as was this project, we thought it admirably planned. As a matter of fact, we were guilty of the maddest imprudence in allowing ourselves to suppose that, even if it should meet with complete success, we could ever put ourselves beyond reach of pursuit. We risked all the consequences, however, with reckless temerity.

CHAPTER XV.

It was with a heavy heart that I saw Manon start for Paris with Marcel, our valet. As I kissed her good-bye I could not help exclaiming :

“ You are not deceiving me, Manon ? You will be faithful to me ? ”



She reproached me tenderly for my suspicions, and reiterated all her vows of constancy.

She expected to arrive in town at about three o'clock. I left soon after her, and went to the *Café de Féré* on the *Pont Saint-Michel*, to while away the remainder of the afternoon as best I could. I stayed there until dusk. Then I went out and took a hackney-coach, which I left

standing, as we had arranged, at the head of the *Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs*, while I proceeded on foot to the doors of the *Comédie*. I was surprised not to find Marcel awaiting me there, as he was to have done. However, I nursed my impatience for an hour, mingling with a crowd of footmen, and keeping a sharp look-out on all passers-by.

At last, when the clock had struck seven, and I still saw no sign of our plans being carried out, I bought a ticket for the pit, and went in to see whether I could discover Manon and G—— M—— in the boxes. Neither of them were there. I returned to the door, where I spent



another quarter of an hour in an agony of impatience and anxiety. Nothing rewarding my vigilance, I walked back to the coach, utterly at a loss as to what my next step should be. The driver, as soon as he caught sight of me, came forward to meet me, and informed me with an air of great mystery, that a pretty young lady had been waiting for me in the coach for more than an hour. She had described my appearance so accurately that he was sure it was I whom she wanted to see; and, on learning that I was coming back to the coach, she had remarked that she was in no hurry and would wait for me.

I jumped to the conclusion that it was Manon; but the

pretty little face I saw as I approached the carriage was not hers, as I had hoped, but a stranger's.

"Have I not the honor of addressing the Chevalier des Grieux?" she began.

I told her that such was my name.

"I have a letter for you," she then said, "which will tell you what has brought me here, and explain how it is that I have the advantage of being acquainted with your name."

I begged her to excuse me for a few minutes while I went into a tavern near by to read it. She expressed a wish to go with me, and advised me to ask for a private room.

"From whom does this letter come?" I asked, as we were on our way upstairs.

"Read it, and you will see," was her response.

I recognized the writing; it was Manon's; and the substance of what she wrote me was as follows:

G—— M—— had welcomed her with a degree of homage and magnificence that surpassed all her expectations—loading her down with gifts and preparing her to lead a life of almost queenly luxury. She assured me, however, that she was not forgetting me in the midst of this new splendor; but she had not been able to persuade G—— M—— to take her to the *Comédie* that evening, and must therefore postpone the pleasure of seeing me until another day. To console me in some degree for the pain which she foresaw this news might occasion me, she had succeeded in getting one of the prettiest of the frail sisterhood of Paris to be the bearer of her note, which was signed "Your faithful love, Manon Lescaut."

There was something so wantonly cruel and insulting to me in the whole tone of this letter that for some moments I scarcely knew whether rage or grief had the mastery in

my heart, and was conscious only of the determination to make one final and desperate effort to banish my perjured and ungrateful mistress forever from my thoughts.

I glanced at the girl before me. She was extremely pretty; and I could have wished that she were beautiful enough to make me forswear honor and constancy in my turn. But hers were not those bright and melting eyes, that divinely moulded form, that complexion of love's own coloring—in a word, that inexhaustible wealth of charms which Nature had lavished upon the faithless Manon.

“No! It cannot be!” I exclaimed, as I withdrew my



gaze from her face. “The heartless being from whom you come was only too well aware that she was sending you on a vain errand. Go back to her, and tell her in my name to enjoy the fruits of her guilt—to enjoy them, if she can, without remorse. For my part, I renounce her now and forever—her and all her sex, none of whom can equal her in loveliness, but all of whom, I doubt not, are as base and as disloyal as herself!”

So saying, I turned away, and was about to leave the house and relinquish forever all claim to Manon's affections. The mortal jealousy which was consuming my heart had taken the guise of a dark and mournful apathy, which led me to imagine that I was nearly cured of my

passion, since I was conscious of none of those violent emotions which had agitated me on previous occasions of this kind. Had I but realized it, alas! I was being hoodwinked by Love as completely as I supposed myself to have been by G—— M—— and Manon.

Seeing that I was on the point of going downstairs, the girl who had brought me the letter asked me what I wished her to tell M. de G—— M—— and the lady who was with him. At this question I returned to the room, and, by a revulsion of feeling which would be thought incredible by any one who has never been the victim of vio-



lent passions, my delusive calmness suddenly deserted me and gave place to an uncontrollable outburst of rage.

“Go!” I cried, “go, and tell that traitor G—— M—— and his false-hearted mistress to what despair your accursed letter has driven me; but warn them that they shall not long make merry over it, for this hand of mine shall soon guide the dagger to both their hearts.”

I threw myself into a chair, letting my hat fall from one hand and my cane from the other, while bitter tears began to stream from my eyes. The passionate indignation which had swept over me only a moment since now died away, and left behind it a melancholy so profound that I

could only sit and weep, save that every now and again there broke from my lips a heavy sigh, or a groan of anguish.

“Come, child, come nearer,” I said at last, turning to the young girl; “come to me, since you have been sent to console me. Tell me if you know of any consolation to offer a heart that is tortured with rage and despair; tell me how to still this imperious longing to kill two false wretches who are unworthy to draw breath, and, that done, to put an end to my own life. Yes, come to me,” I continued, as I saw her take one or two timid and faltering steps towards me, “come, and wipe away my tears; come, and restore peace to my heart; come, and tell me that you love me, so that I may grow accustomed to being loved by another, now that my faithless one has deserted me. You are beautiful: perchance I may yet be able to love you in return.”

The poor child, who was not more than sixteen or seventeen years of age, and who seemed to be possessed of more modesty than is common among her class, was utterly bewildered by this unwonted scene. She approached me, however, and would have caressed me, but I thrust her quickly away, and exclaimed, as I held her from me at arm’s length :

“Stop! Do not touch me! Pah! Are you not a *woman*, one of a sex which I abhor, the very sight of which is more than I can bear? The sweetness of your face is in itself a menace of some new treachery. Go! and leave me here alone!”

She ventured no reply, but made me a bow, and turned to leave the room. I called out to her to stay.

“Tell me at least, before you go,” I resumed, “why, how, and with what object you were sent here. How did you learn my name, and where to find me?”

She then told me that M. de G—— M—— was an old acquaintance of hers. At five o'clock that afternoon he had sent for her; and, on following the lackey who had brought his message, she had been taken to a fine mansion where she had found him playing at *piquet* with a very beautiful lady. She had received instructions from them both to deliver the letter which she had placed in my hands, having first been told by them that she would find me waiting in a coach at the end of the *Rue Saint-André*.

I inquired whether this was all they had said to her.

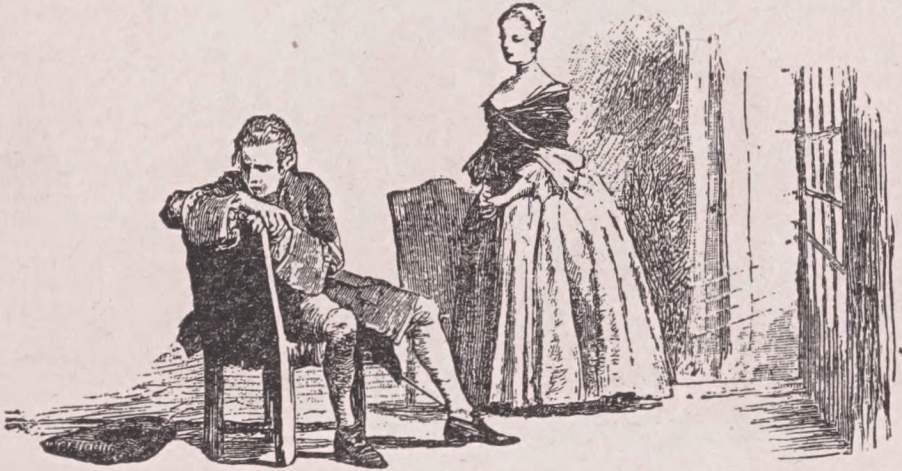


She replied, with a blush, that they had led her to hope that I would take her to live with me as my mistress.

“Then,” said I, “they deceived you, my poor girl, they deceived you cruelly. You are a woman, and being a woman, you cannot do without a lover. But you want a lover who is rich and happy, and you will not find him here. Go back to G—— M——; yes, be advised by me, and go back to him. He can boast of all that a man need have in order to win the favor of the fair. He can lavish upon them gifts of houses, and carriages, and whole retinues of servants. As for me, who have only love and constancy to offer, women scorn my poverty and make sport of my simplicity!”

Thus did I run on, now in a strain of sadness, now of indignation, as each of the various passions that were contending in my breast in turn subsided or gained the upper hand. Gradually, however, my self-tormentings had the effect of calming the tumult of my feelings sufficiently to allow of my making some reflections.

I compared this last misfortune with the others of the same kind which I had already endured, and I saw no more reason to despair in this than in the former cases. Understanding Manon's character as I did, why should I allow myself to be overwhelmed by a trial which I ought

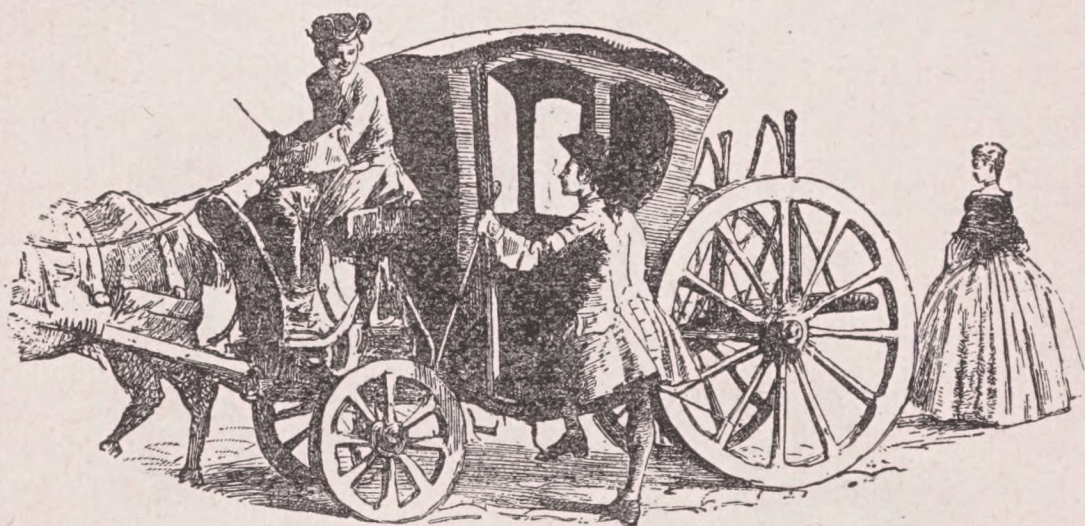


to have foreseen and guarded against? Why not rather set about discovering some way of remedying it? It was not yet too late. At all events, I felt that I must spare no pains in the task, unless I wished to have myself to reproach for contributing to my own unhappiness by my negligence. I began at once, therefore, to consider every expedient that seemed to hold out the least ray of hope.

To attempt to wrest her forcibly from the clutches of G—— M—— would be a desperate undertaking, likely to result only in my ruin, and presenting absolutely no prospect of success. But I was convinced that if I could find some way of speaking to her, if only for a few short

moments, I could not fail to touch her heart in my favor—so well did I know its tender places, so sure was I that she really loved me! I would have been willing to wager that this whimsical notion of sending a pretty girl to comfort me had originated with her, and was simply an outcome of the compassion she was feeling for me in my distress. I was resolved that I would see her and speak to her at whatever cost.

After passing many plans under consideration, I decided upon the following one. M. de T—— had given evidence of such warm friendship in the services he had already



rendered me, that it was impossible for me to entertain the slightest doubt of his sincerity and devotion. I determined to go to him at once, and persuade him to send for G—— M—— under pretence of having important business to transact with him. Half an hour would suffice for all I had to say to Manon. My design was nothing more nor less than to gain access to her own room; and this I believed that I could easily accomplish during G—— M——'s absence.

This resolution having somewhat restored my peace of mind, I paid the young girl (who was still with me) handsomely for her services; and, in order to deter her

from going back to those who had sent her, I made a note of her address, leading her to expect a visit from me later in the evening. Then, getting into the coach again, I drove as fast as the horses could carry me to M. de T——'s house. I was fortunate enough to find him at home; having been in an agony of apprehension all the way lest he might be out when I arrived. In a few words I acquainted him with my troubles, and with the service I had come to ask at his hands.

M. de T—— was so amazed to learn that G—— M—— had succeeded in seducing Manon, that, not being aware of how far I had been instrumental in bringing this misfortune upon myself, he generously offered to gather all his friends together and rescue my mistress by force of arms. I pointed out to him that the scandal which would inevitably be created by such an affray might be fraught with dangerous results for Manon and myself.

“We will have no bloodshed,” said I, “until we are driven to the last extremity. The plan I have in view is less violent, but, I expect, will prove quite as successful.”

He pledged himself unconditionally to do anything I might require of him; and when I repeated that all that was needed was for him to send word to G—— M—— that he wished to speak to him, and to keep him out of the way for an hour or two, he at once set out with me to do as I desired.

We cast about for some plausible pretext that he could use for detaining G—— M—— so long. I advised that he should first write a short note, dated at some tavern, asking him to come there at once on an affair of such importance that it would not brook delay.

“I will be on the watch,” I added, “to see him leave the house. I can then easily effect an entrance, as I am known to no one in it, except Manon and Marcel, my own

valet. In the meanwhile, you, who will be with G—— M——, can tell him that the important matter concerning which you are anxious to speak to him is your pressing need of some money, as you have just lost all your own at play, and have staked your honor for a great deal more with the same unfortunate result. It will take some time for him to go to his banker's with you; and this will give me all I need for the execution of my design."

M. de T—— followed out this arrangement in every detail. I left him in a tavern, where he lost no time in writing his letter; while I went and posted myself at a



few paces' distance from Manon's house. I saw the bearer of the message arrive, and G—— M—— leave the house a few moments afterwards, and walk away, followed by a lackey. After giving him time to get well out of the street, I went up to my faithless mistress's door, and, in spite of all my indignation, knocked at it as reverentially as though it had been the portal of a temple.

Fortunately for me it was Marcel who answered the summons. I made him a sign to be silent, although, indeed, I had nothing to fear from the other servants. I asked him in an undertone whether he could take me to the room Manon was in without my being observed. He

replied that that could be easily done, by creeping cautiously up the main staircase.

“Come quickly, then,” said I, “and try to prevent any one from going up while I am there.”

I succeeded in reaching her apartments without encountering any obstacle.

CHAPTER XVI.

MANON was quietly reading when I entered the room ; and I could not help admiring the singular character of the girl as displayed in this unconscious touch. So far from being startled, or showing the least timidity when



she saw me, she merely betrayed such slight symptoms of surprise as are involuntarily called forth by the sudden appearance of a person supposed to be far away.

“ Ah ! It is you, my love ! ” she exclaimed, as she came forward to embrace me with her accustomed tenderness. “ How rash you are ! Who would have expected to see you to-day, and here, of all places ? ”

I freed myself from her arms, and instead of responding

to her caresses, repulsed her with scorn, and drew back some paces from her. This proceeding on my part naturally disconcerted her. She remained standing in the same position, and gazed at me, while her cheeks flushed and then grew pale.

In my secret soul I was so overjoyed at seeing her once more, that, despite all my just reasons for indignation, I could scarcely summon up resolution to open my lips and upbraid her. Yet my heart was bleeding from the cruel wrong she had done me. I recalled it vividly to mind, that it might kindle my resentment, and I strove to make my eyes flash with another fire than that of love.

As I remained silent for some moments, and she gradually became aware of the excitement under which I was laboring, I noticed that she began to tremble, apparently from fear. This sight was more than I could bear.

“Ah, Manon!” I said to her tenderly, “false and inconstant Manon! Where shall my reproaches begin? I see you pale and trembling before me, and I am still so readily moved by the slightest pain you suffer, that I dread to distress you too deeply by my rebukes. But, Manon, believe me, my heart is pierced with anguish at your disloyalty. Such blows as this can be dealt a lover with only one object—and that, his death! This is the third time, Manon; too well have I counted them for it to be possible that I should forget! Now the hour has come for you to consider, once and for all, what your choice is to be; for my unhappy heart is no longer proof against treatment so cruel as this. I feel that it is even now succumbing, and almost breaking with grief. I can bear no more,” I added, sinking into a chair; “I have scarcely strength enough left to speak or to stand!”

She made me no reply, but, as soon as I was seated, she knelt down and, resting her head upon my knees, hid

her face in my hands. In another instant I felt them moistened by her tears. Heaven only knows what were my emotions at that moment.

“Ah, Manon, Manon!” I sighed, “why give me tears now, at the eleventh hour, after you have robbed me of all that made life dear to me? You are feigning a grief you cannot feel. The greatest of your afflictions, I doubt not, is my presence, which has always been an irksome hindrance to your pleasures. Open your eyes; look, and see who I am; such tender tears as these are not shed, I



am sure, for an unhappy wretch whom you have betrayed and cruelly forsaken!”

She covered my hands with kisses, but did not change her attitude.

“Inconstant Manon!” continued I, “faithless and ungrateful girl! What of your promises and of your vows? What of the love you swore to me this very day, thrice fickle and cruel one? Just Heaven! Is a perfidious woman to call you thus solemnly to witness, and then to mock at you like this? Is perjury, then, to be rewarded, while faith and constancy are left in despair?”

My reflections were so bitter as I uttered these words, that in spite of myself they drew tears from my eyes.

My broken voice betrayed to Manon the fact that I was weeping, and at last she spoke.

“I must indeed be guilty,” she murmured sadly, “since it seems that I have caused you so much pain and distress; but may Heaven be my judge if I have been so wittingly, or if I have harbored any intention of becoming so!”

This declaration appeared to me so devoid alike of meaning and of candor, that I could not restrain a fierce outburst of indignation.

“Such base dissimulation as this,” I cried, “only serves



to show me more plainly than ever how false and shallow is your heart. At last your odious character stands revealed to me in its true light. Farewell, unworthy being!” I continued, rising to my feet; “from this time forth we are strangers. Rather would I die a hundred deaths than remain any longer in your toils! I, too, invite the retribution of Heaven if ever I honor you again with a single glance. Stay here with this last gallant of yours: give him your love; reserve your hatred for me! Renounce honor, renounce reason—do what you will; scorn and indifference are all that I can feel for you henceforth!”

This passionate outbreak so terrified Manon that she

remained kneeling before the chair from which I had risen, and fixed her eyes upon my face with a piteous gaze, while she trembled from head to foot and seemed almost afraid to draw her breath. I advanced a few steps further towards the door, looking back at her over my shoulder as I went. But I must have been lost to all sense of humanity to have steeled my heart against the mute appeal of her lovely face. So far was I from being equal to such barbarity, that I recoiled suddenly to the opposite extreme, and, yielding to an unreflecting impulse,



turned—nay, rather, flew back to her side. Folding her in my arms, I rained a hundred fond kisses on her lips, and besought her to forgive my angry words, confessing that I was a brutal wretch and utterly unworthy of the happiness of being loved by such an adorable woman as herself. Then, leading her to a chair, I in my turn fell upon my knees, and implored her to listen to me as I knelt before her. In that posture I expressed my contrition in a few reverent and tender words, such as only a devoted and impassioned lover can find ; and begged her to be merciful and pronounce my pardon.

Throwing her arms about my neck, she said that it was she, rather, who must appeal to my generosity and for-

bearance to forget the distress which she had caused me ; and, she added, she was beginning to see reason to fear that I would disapprove of what she had to tell me in self-justification.

“Justification !” I here broke in ; “I ask for nothing of the sort from you. I approve of all that you have done. It is not for me to exact reasons for your conduct. I am only too well satisfied and happy as long as my dearest Manon does not cast me out of her heart. But,” added I, forgetting for the moment the actual state of affairs, “all-powerful Manon—you who can at pleasure mete out to me joy or sorrow—now that I have propitiated you by my submission and by these evidences of my repentance, may I not be suffered to tell you of the misery and anguish to which I am a prey ? May I not learn from your lips what my doom is to be to-day, and whether my sentence of death is to be irrevocably pronounced by your passing this night in my rival’s arms ?”

She pondered some moments before replying, and then, regaining her composure of manner, she said : “My dear Chevalier, had you expressed yourself as clearly as this at the outset, you would have saved yourself a great deal of agitation and spared me a very distressing scene. Had I known that jealousy alone was the source of all your grief, I would have relieved your mind by offering to follow you at once to the very ends of the earth. But I was under the impression that your annoyance was due to the letter I was forced to write you under G—— M——’s very eyes, and to the girl we sent with it. I thought that you might have regarded my letter as a piece of deliberate mockery, and, supposing the girl to have gone to you on my behalf, might have construed her errand as a declaration on my part that I intended to forsake you for G—— M——. It was this idea that so suddenly overwhelmed me with

terror; for, innocent as I was, a moment's reflection served to show me that appearances were sadly against me. However," she continued, "I ask you to judge me after you have heard the true version of the matter from my lips."

She then related all that had occurred from the moment of her going to meet G—— M——, whom she had found awaiting her in the very room in which we were now sitting. The proudest princess on earth could not, in truth, have expected a more royal welcome than he had



given her. He had himself conducted her through all the apartments of the house, which were furnished richly, but in admirable taste. In her boudoir he had counted out to her ten thousand francs, besides giving her a number of jewels, among which figured the pearl necklace and bracelets she had received once already as a present from his father. He had then led her into a large room which she had not seen before, where she found a sumptuous collation spread for her. She was waited upon by the new servants whom he had hired especially for her, and whom he now ordered to consider her as their mistress for the future. After that he had shown her the carriage, the horses, and all his other presents; and had finally pro-

posed that they should have a game of cards to pass the time until supper was ready.

“I frankly own,” continued Manon, “that I was dazzled by this magnificence. It seemed to me that it would be a thousand pities to cheat ourselves of all this wealth by running away from it and taking nothing with me but the money and the jewelry. Here, thought I, is a fortune, all ready made and waiting for us both; and there is nothing to prevent our living in luxury and ease at G—— M——’s expense. Instead, therefore, of sug-



gesting that he should take me to the *Comédie*, I determined to sound him as to the sentiments he entertained towards you, and thus to ascertain what opportunities you and I should have of seeing one another in future, supposing that my scheme were to be carried into effect. I found him of a most accommodating disposition. He asked me what I thought of you, and whether I had not felt some regret at leaving you.

“I told him that you possessed so many amiable qualities, and had always treated me so well, that it was only natural that I should regard you with great esteem. He admitted that he had a high opinion of your merits, and would be very glad to count you among his friends. He

questioned me as to the spirit in which I thought you would take my desertion of you, especially when it came to your knowledge that I was in his hands. I replied that our love was now an affair of such long standing that its first ardor had had time to cool a little; and that you were, besides, somewhat straitened for money, and probably would not regard the loss of me as a great misfortune—since it would relieve you of a burden which you could ill support.

“I added that I had been so sure of your taking the affair in good part, that I had felt no hesitation in telling you that I was coming to Paris on some business of my own; you had raised no objections, I told him; and, having occasion to come to town yourself, you had shown no great uneasiness when I parted from you.

“‘If I thought,’ he then said, ‘that the Chevalier des Grieux were disposed to be on friendly terms with me, I should be the first to pay my respects to him and place myself at his service.’

“I assured him that, knowing your character as I did, I had no doubt that you would respond cordially to any advances on his part; especially, I added, if he were willing to assist you in extricating yourself from the pecuniary embarrassment in which you had become involved since you had been at variance with your family.

“He interrupted me to assure me that he would do anything in his power to serve you; and would even, if you felt inclined to engage in another love affair, procure you a charming mistress, whom he had deserted for my sake. I applauded this proposal warmly, in order to leave him absolutely no grounds for suspicion; and being now more determined than ever to put my scheme into execution, my one thought was as to how I could communicate it to you, for I was afraid that you might be needlessly

alarmed when I failed to keep my appointment with you. It was with this object in view that I suggested to him that we should send you your new mistress this very evening, as that would furnish me with a pretext for writing to you. I was compelled to resort to this subterfuge because I saw no hope of his leaving me at liberty for a single moment. Laughing at my proposal, he called his servant, and asked him whether he could find his former mistress immediately, and then sent him off to look for her in every direction. G—— M—— was under



the impression that she would have to go to Chaillot to see you; but I told him that, on leaving you, I had promised to rejoin you at the *Comédie*, or, in case anything should prevent my going there, that you were to wait for me in a coach, at the end of the *Rue Saint-André*. It would be better, therefore, I said, to send your new mistress to you there, if only to prevent your dancing attendance there all night long.

“I told him, also, that it would be as well to write you a few words explaining this exchange, as you would otherwise be at a loss to understand it. He consented to this, but I was obliged to write in his presence, and I was very careful not to express myself too unguardedly in my letter.

“And now I have told you,” continued Manon, “how it all came about. I am concealing nothing from you, either as to what I did, or as to what I intended to do. The young girl came ; I thought her pretty ; and as I had no doubt that my absence would distress you, most sincerely did I hope that she might serve to divert your melancholy for awhile ; the constancy I expect from you being that of the heart alone.

“I should have been only too glad to send Marcel to you, had I been able to do so ; but it was impossible for



me to secure an opportunity of instructing him as to what I wished you to be told.”

She brought her story to an end by telling me how embarrassed G—— M—— had been on receiving the note from M. de T——.

“He hesitated for some time,” she said, “as to whether he ought to leave me, and went away assuring me that he would return very shortly. That is the reason why I cannot help feeling uneasy at your being here, and was so surprised when you came into the room.”

I heard her tale very patiently, much as there was in it that was calculated to wound and mortify me ; for her intention of being unfaithful to me was so clear that she

had not even taken the trouble to disguise it from me. She could not hope that G—— M—— would leave her all night in vestal purity ; and what torture there was for a lover in the thought of her contemplating any other alternative ! Still, I considered that I had been partly to blame for her frailty, by having, in the first place, let her know the sentiments which G—— M—— entertained towards her, and then by having been weak enough to enter blindly into her rash project. Moreover, owing to a certain turn of mind, peculiar, perhaps, to myself, I was



touched by the ingenuousness of her confession, and by the frank and artless manner in which she related even those details which were most unpalatable to me. “She sins without any malice of intention,” I said to myself. “She is frivolous and imprudent, but right-minded and sincere.” Add to this the fact that my love for her was in itself enough to blind me to all her faults, and that I was more than satisfied by the hope of carrying her away from my rival that very evening. Nevertheless, I could not restrain myself from saying :

“But what of to-night ? With whom were you going to spend it ? ”

This question, which I asked in a sad tone, utterly

disconcerted her. She attempted to reply, but could only falter out "buts" and "ifs," until, pitying her confusion, I interrupted her to say firmly that I expected her to leave the house with me at once.

"I shall do so willingly," she replied. "But you do not approve of my project, then?"

"What more can you ask," I exclaimed in response, "than that I should approve of all that you have done so far?"

"But surely you cannot object to our taking the money, at all events? It is my own; he gave it to me."



I advised her to relinquish everything, and to think only of making good our flight; for, though I had been with her barely half an hour, I was in terror lest G—— M—— might return at any moment. She begged so earnestly, however, for my consent to our not leaving empty-handed, that I thought it only fair to yield a little to her wishes, when she had yielded so much to mine.

While we were occupied in the preparations for our departure, I heard some one knocking at the street-door. I fully believed it to be G—— M——, and, in my desperation at this thought, I told Manon that if he made his appearance it would be to meet his death. Nor had I, indeed, as yet regained sufficient calmness to have been

able to control myself had I seen him. Marcel, however, put an end to my suspense by bringing me a note which had been given him at the door for me. It was from M. de T——. He wrote that he was taking advantage of the absence of G—— M——, who had gone home to get some money for him, to tell me of an amusing idea that had occurred to him. It appeared to him, he went on to say, that I could not be more agreeably revenged on my rival than by regaling myself with the supper intended for him, and by sleeping that very night in the bed which he anticipated sharing with my mistress. There would be no difficulty in accomplishing this, proceeded M. de T——, if I could secure the services of three or four men daring enough to seize G—— M—— in the street, and trusty enough to keep him a close prisoner until the following day. He promised, for his own part, to detain him for another hour at least, on various pretexts which he was ready to meet him with on his return.

I showed this note to Manon, and explained the ruse by which I had succeeded in gaining access to her room. She was loud in her praises of the ingenuity of my plan, as well as of M. de T——'s, and we enjoyed a few moments' hearty laughter over them both. But, on my alluding to the latter as merely an excellent jest, she surprised me by declaring that she was delighted with the idea, and urging me quite seriously to carry it into effect. In vain did I ask her where she supposed that I was thus on a sudden to find men who could be relied upon to seize G—— M—— and keep him in safe custody. She said that we must try, at any rate, as M. de T—— vouched for our having still an hour at our disposal; while, to all my other objections, her only response was that I was playing the tyrant, and had no regard for her wishes. The project had caught her fancy so completely

that nothing would content her but to see it put into execution.

“You shall take his place at supper,” she repeated, again and again, “you shall sleep in his bed, and bright and early to-morrow morning you shall make off with his mistress and his money. Ah, richly will you be revenged on both father and son !”

I finally yielded to her persuasions, though my heart was full of secret misgivings, which seemed to augur an unhappy ending to this affair. I went out, intending



to ask two or three officers of the Guards, whose acquaintance I had made through Lescaut, to undertake the seizure of G—— M——. I found only one of them at home ; but he was an adventurous spirit, and had no sooner heard what I wanted done, than he assured me of success ; only asking me to give him ten *pistoles* with which to pay three privates of the Guards whom he proposed to hire and lead himself.

I begged him to lose no time ; and he mustered them in less than a quarter of an hour. In the meanwhile, I was waiting for him at his house ; and as soon as he returned with his confederates, I led him myself to the corner of the street along which G—— M—— must necessarily pass on

his way back to Manon. I instructed the Guardsman to do him no harm, but to keep him so closely confined until seven o'clock the next morning that I might be under no apprehension of his making his escape.

"My plan," said the officer, "is to take him to my own room, compel him to strip himself, and, perhaps, to sleep in my bed, while these three brave fellows and myself spend the night over a bottle and a pack of cards."

I remained with them until I saw G—— M—— approaching, and then withdrew into a dark recess a little further



down the street, whence I could be a witness of the strange scene which was about to be enacted.

The Guardsman accosted him, pistol in hand, and gave him civilly to understand that he had no designs upon either his money or his life; but that unless he followed him without making the slightest difficulty or raising the faintest alarm, he would blow out his brains. G—— M——, seeing him backed up by three soldiers, and having, doubtless, a wholesome fear of the contents of the pistol, offered no resistance, and I saw him led away like a lamb.

I then hastened back to Manon; and, in order to prevent any suspicion on the part of the servants, I said to her as I entered the room that supper need not be kept waiting

for M. de G—— M——, as some business had arisen which would detain him, much to his regret; and that he had asked me to come and make his excuses to her for his absence and to take supper with her; an honor of which the company of so fair a lady made me very sensible.

She seconded me very cleverly in my design, and we took our places at the table. We assumed an air of grave propriety before the servants while they remained in the room to wait upon us; and when, at last, we had dismissed them, we passed one of the most delightful evenings of our lives. I gave Marcel secret orders to find a coach and to tell the driver to be at the door before six o'clock the next morning.

Towards midnight I pretended to take my leave of Manon; but I was noiselessly let into the house again by Marcel, and was soon preparing to occupy G—— M——'s bed, as I had already usurped his place at table.

CHAPTER XVII.

MEANWHILE, our evil genius was busy plotting our downfall. At the very moment when we were draining the cup of bliss, the sword was hanging suspended over our heads,



and the slender thread by which it was upheld was soon to snap. But, for the better understanding of all the circumstances attending our ruin it will be necessary to throw some light upon the causes which led up to it.

When G—— M—— had been waylaid by the Guardsman, he had had a lackey following him. Terrified by the adventure which had befallen his master, the fellow had turned about and taken to his heels. His first effort

towards obtaining assistance had been to run to old G—— M—— and tell him of the whole occurrence. My rival's father was naturally not a little alarmed by this bad news, for G—— M—— was his only son. He was possessed of remarkable energy and spirit for a man of his years; and at once proceeded to examine the lackey as to everything that his son had been doing during the afternoon; inquiring particularly whether there was any one with whom he had had an altercation, whether he had embroiled himself in anyone else's quarrels, and whether he had been in any house of questionable character.

The poor fellow, supposing his master to be in peril of his life, and thinking that he was in duty bound to sacrifice every other consideration to that of obtaining aid for him, made a full disclosure of all that he knew regarding G—— M——'s passion for Manon, and the money he had squandered upon her; detailing how he had spent the afternoon and evening at her house until about nine o'clock; how he had then gone out, and the mishap he had met with on his way back. The father saw good grounds in all this for suspecting that his son's trouble was the result of some love-scape.

Although it was half-past ten at night, at the earliest, he betook himself without a moment's hesitation to the Lieutenant-General of Police, and requested him to issue special orders to every squad of the night-watch. Then, asking for one of them as an escort for himself, he hastened to the street in which his son had been waylaid, and proceeded to search every part of the city in which he thought there was any hope of finding him. Failing to discover any trace of him, he finally ordered the lackey to take him to the house in which his son's mistress lived; thinking it possible that he might have returned there.

I was preparing for bed when he arrived. The door of our room being closed, I did not hear the knocking at the street door; but he entered the house, accompanied by two Archers, and after making some fruitless inquiries as to his son's whereabouts, he decided to see his mistress and get what enlightenment he could from her. He came upstairs to the room we were in, still followed by the Archers.

Just as we were about to get into bed, he threw open



the door, and our hearts sank within us as we saw him standing before us.

"Heaven protect us!" I cried to Manon, "it is old G—— M——!"

I sprang forward to seize my sword; but, alas! it was entangled in the belt. The Archers, whose quick eyes had detected the object of my sudden movement, ran at once to wrest the weapon from me. A man in his night-shirt is scarcely in a condition to offer much resistance, and I was quickly deprived of all means of defence.

G—— M——, although this scene caused him no little perturbation, was not long in recognizing me; and Manon he knew even more readily.

"Is this a dream?" he said grimly, "or do I indeed

see before me the Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut?"

I was so overcome with rage, mortification, and grief that I attempted no reply. For some moments he appeared to be following out his own thoughts, and then, as though they had suddenly inflamed his wrath, he cried, addressing me:

"Scoundrel! You have murdered my son! I am convinced of it!"

This insult cut me to the quick, and I replied haughtily: "Had I thought it worth while to kill any of your family, you old villain, I should have begun with you!"

"Hold him fast!" he said to the Archers, and then to me: "What has become of my son? I insist upon your telling me! As I live, I will have you hanged to-morrow, unless you let me know at once what you have done with him!"

"You will have me hanged, forsooth!" I retorted; "nay, the gallows is meant for you, and ruffians of your kidney! Let me tell you, sir, that a nobler and a purer blood than yours runs in my veins. Yes," I went on, "I *do* know what has happened to your son; if you provoke me much further, I will have him strangled before morning, and I promise you the same fate after him!"

I could scarcely have been guilty of a greater piece of imprudence than in thus confessing that I knew the whereabouts of his son; but I forgot all discretion in the heat of my indignation. He immediately summoned five or six other Archers who were waiting at the door, and ordered them to place all the servants in the house under arrest.

"Ah ha! my noble Chevalier!" he then resumed, in a mocking tone: "So you know where my son is, and you

will have him strangled, say you ! We shall have something to say about that, you may depend upon it ! ”

I realized at once the fatal mistake that I had made.

Advancing towards Manon, who was sitting upon the bed, weeping bitterly, he complimented her ironically upon the sway she wielded over both father and son alike, and upon the good account to which she succeeded in turning it. The lecherous old monster would then have attempted to take some liberties with her, had I not checked him by hotly exclaiming :



“ Dare to lay hands upon her, and nothing under heaven shall protect you from my vengeance ! ”

Thereupon he went out, leaving three Archers in the room, with orders to see that we dressed ourselves without delay.

What his intentions regarding us may then have been, I cannot say. Possibly we might have obtained our release by consenting to tell him where his son was to be found. I reflected, as I drew on my clothes, whether this might not be the wisest course to adopt. But if such had been his inclination on leaving our room, it had undergone a complete change when he returned.

He had been questioning Manon's servants, whom the Archers had arrested, and had failed to get any informa-

tion from those whom his son had hired for her. But on learning that Marcel had been in our service before, he had resolved to force him to speak out by threatening him with severe penalties, and so working upon his fears.

Marcel was a faithful fellow, but simple and dull-witted. The recollection of the share he had taken in rescuing Manon from the *Hôpital*, added to the terror with which G—— M—— succeeded in inspiring him, so affected his weak mind that he fully believed that he was about to be dragged straight to the gallows or to be broken upon the



wheel. He promised to disclose all that he knew, if only they would spare his life. This convinced G—— M—— that we were guilty of some more serious and criminal offence than he had as yet seen reason to suppose. He assured Marcel that he would not only spare his life, but reward him liberally, if he would make a full confession.

The unhappy wretch then acquainted him with part of our plot. We had discussed it freely in his presence, because of the share he was to take in its execution. He was, it is true, entirely in the dark as to the changes we had made in it since coming to Paris; but he had received full instructions on leaving Chaillot as to our arrangements and the part he was to play in them. He informed

his questioner, therefore, that our project was to make a dupe of his son; and that Manon was to receive, or had already received from him, the sum of ten thousand francs, which the G—— M—— family and its heirs would never lay eyes on again, if we succeeded in carrying out our design.

Enraged at this discovery, the old man hurried upstairs and abruptly re-entered our room. Without a word, he passed through it to the dressing-room, where he had no difficulty in finding the money and jewels. Then, coming back to us, with his face positively purple with fury, he



showed us what he was pleased to call our booty, and loaded us with insulting rebukes. Thrusting the pearl-necklace and bracelets under Manon's very eyes, he said to her with a sneer:

"Do you recognize them? This is not the first time that you have seen them! Yes, as I live, they are the same, the very same! 'Tis easy to see that they were vastly to your taste, my fair lady! Poor innocents!" continued he; "you are a charming pair, truly; but not as honest as you might be!"

My blood boiled within me at these offensive taunts. I would have given my right hand—aye, my very hopes of

heaven, for a moment's freedom. At last, after an inward struggle, I mastered myself sufficiently to say with a calmness of manner that was really only a refinement of rage :

“ A truce, sir, to these insolent jeers ! What are you going to do with us ? Come, frankly—what are we to expect ? ”

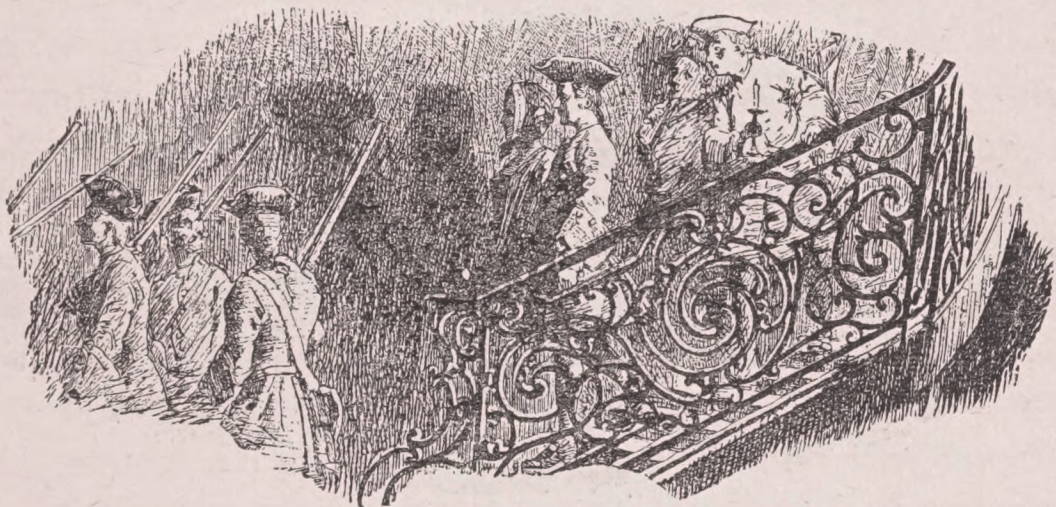
“ What am I going to do with you, most noble Chevalier ? ” he replied. “ I will tell you : I am going to march you straight to the prison of the *Châtelet*. To-morrow's sun will enable us to take a clearer view of these little affairs of ours ; and I trust that, before we have done with them, you will do me the honor of informing me where my son is to be found. ”

It required but little reflection to impress upon me how terrible would be the consequences for us if we were once to be confined in the *Châtelet*. With a shudder I foresaw all the dangers of such a prospect. In spite of all my pride, I recognized that there was nothing for it but to bow to my destiny, and flatter my bitterest enemy by submission, in the hope of thus obtaining some mercy from him. I begged him, in a conciliatory tone, to listen to me patiently for a few moments, and then said :

“ I will not attempt to justify my conduct, sir. I freely admit that my youthful folly has led me into the commission of some grave faults, and that you have been sufficiently injured by them to give you very good reason to complain. But if you knew the power of love—if you could appreciate the anguish that is felt by an unhappy young man who sees all that he most cherishes about to be torn from his arms—then, perhaps, you would not think it an unpardonable offence that I should have sought to enjoy some slight revenge ; or you would at least consider me sufficiently punished by the affront to which I

have just been subjected. There is no need of either imprisonment or torture to force me to reveal your son's whereabouts. He is safe. It was no part of my design to do him any harm, or to injure you in any way. He is now spending the night in peace and security, and I am prepared to tell you *where*, on condition that you will be good enough to grant us our liberty."

The merciless old barbarian, so far from being moved by my appeal, turned his back upon me with a laugh, and merely muttered a few words to the effect that he was



fully informed as to what our plans were, from beginning to end. As for his son, he brutally added, he would find his own way out of his predicament soon enough, as I had not assassinated him.

"Take them to the *petit Châtelet*," he said, turning to the Archers, "and keep a sharp eye on the Chevalier, or he will contrive to slip away from you; for he is a cunning rogue, and has made his escape from *Saint-Lazare* before now."

He then took his departure, leaving me in a condition of mind that may be more easily imagined than described.

"O Heaven!" I cried, "I will submit resignedly to all the afflictions that you in your wisdom may visit upon

me ; but that a miserable scoundrel like this should have it in his power to tyrannize over me thus is more than I can bear ! ”

The Archers were growing impatient, and ordered us not to keep them waiting any longer. They had a coach ready at the door. I held out my hand to Manon to assist her downstairs, and said :

“ Come, sweet mistress of my heart ! Come and submit to the cruel decrees of our destiny. Some day, perchance, it may please Heaven to grant us a happier fate ! ”



We were both put into the same coach, and as we were driven away from the house, Manon threw herself into my arms. Not a word had she uttered since the moment of G—— M——’s first appearance ; but now that she found herself once more alone with me, she poured forth innumerable expressions of endearment, and of self-reproach for having brought this misfortune upon me. I assured her that, whatever my fate might be, I would never complain so long as she continued to love me.

“ It is not I who am to be pitied,” I continued ; “ a few months’ imprisonment has no terrors for me, and, in any case, the *Châtelet* is preferable to *Saint Lazare*. It is for you, sweet soul, that my heart is bleeding. What a

prospect is this to confront a lovely being like yourself! How, oh! how can Providence wreak such cruelty upon the most perfect of its creations? Why is it that we were not born, you and I, with qualities in keeping with the misery before us? We have been endowed with intelligence, with taste, and with fine feeling—and all, alas! to what end? While, on the other hand, how many ignoble souls, worthy of no better fate than ours, are to be seen in the enjoyment of every favor that fortune has to bestow!”

Bitter as were these reflections, they were cheerful in comparison with the fears that were agitating my mind with regard to the future. My heart was sick with dread of what might befall Manon. She had already been an inmate of the *Hôpital*, and though, for once, she had been fortunate enough to escape with impunity, I knew how dangerous were the consequences of relapses of this kind. It would have been a relief to confide my misgivings to her; but I was fearful of alarming her too much. I could only sit and tremble for her, without daring to warn her of the peril she was in; and I sighed as I pressed her to my heart and assured her again and again of my love—which was almost the only feeling I dared trust myself to express.

“Manon,” I said, “answer me frankly: will you always love me?”

“It makes me very unhappy,” she responded, “to think that you can doubt it.”

“I do not doubt it, then,” I replied; “and with that assurance from your lips, I am ready to defy all our enemies. I will make use of the influence of my family to obtain my release from the *Châtelet*, and, once free myself, I will rescue you from it, if I have to shed my blood to the last drop in the attempt!”

On reaching the prison we were separated and placed

in different wards. Had I not been prepared for this, it would have been a cruel blow ; as it was, I found it hard to bear. I commended Manon to the good offices of the warder, giving him to understand at the same time that I was a person of some consideration, and promising him a liberal reward if he treated her kindly. Before I was parted from my beloved mistress, I clasped her fondly in my arms and besought her not to give way to despair, and to have no fears as long as I remained alive to protect her. There was a little money in my purse. I gave her



part of it, and out of what was left paid the warder a month's full board in advance, for her and myself.

My money had a very good effect. I was put into a comfortably furnished room, and assured that a similar one had been given to Manon. Left to myself, I at once began to consider how I could most speedily regain my liberty. One thing was clear ; there was nothing absolutely criminal in all I had done. Even supposing that it were proved, on Marcel's evidence, that it was our intention to commit a theft, I was well enough versed in the law to be aware that no penalty attaches to the mere contemplation of an offence. I decided to write to my father without delay, and beg him to come to Paris in person. As I have already said, I felt much less shame at being

imprisoned in the *Châtelet* than at *Saint-Lazare*. Moreover, though I still retained all due respect for the paternal authority, increased age and experience had greatly diminished my former timidity. In short, the letter was written, and the authorities of the *Châtelet* raised no objection to my sending it. I might have spared myself the pains, however; for, had I but known it, my father was to be in Paris the very next day.

He had received the letter which I had written him a week before, and had been overjoyed at its contents. But, in spite of the hopes which I had encouraged him to indulge regarding my reformation, he had not thought it wise to rely entirely upon my promises, and had decided to come and assure himself of my conversion by the evidence of his own eyes, and to be governed in his subsequent course by the degree of sincerity I showed in my repentance. He arrived in Paris the day after my arrest. He first went to see Tiberge, to whose care I had asked him to address his reply. My friend was unable to give him any information as to my present whereabouts or occupation, and all that he could gather from him was a general outline of my principal adventures since my flight from Saint Sulpice. Tiberge spoke very encouragingly, however, of the disposition I had shown during our last interview, to reform my way of life. He added that he believed me to have finally separated from Manon, but expressed his surprise at my not having given him any news of myself for a week past.

My father was not a man to be easily duped. He surmised that this silence of which Tiberge complained had something behind it which that simple soul had not penetration enough to discover, and he made such diligent efforts to trace me, that before two days had passed he had found out that I was a prisoner in the *Chatelet*.

Before his visit, which I little suspected to be so near at hand, I received one from the Lieutenant-General of Police; or, to call things by their proper names, I was subjected to an examination by him. He reprimanded me a little, but not with undue harshness or severity; telling me kindly that he was sorry that I should have been guilty of such misconduct, and pointing out how imprudent I had been to make an enemy of a man like G—— M——.

“It is clear enough,” he went on to say, “that your



offence was prompted by thoughtlessness and folly rather than by actual malice. This is the second time, however, that you have brought yourself within the pale of my jurisdiction; and I was in hopes that you had profited more than you seem to have done by the two or three months' discipline you underwent at *Saint-Lazare*.”

I was overjoyed to find that I had such a considerate judge to deal with, and answered all his questions with so much deference and self-restraint that he seemed to be very favorably impressed. He told me not to let my present situation weigh too heavily on my mind, as he felt inclined to befriend me, in consideration of my youth and rank.

I then ventured to plead with him on Manon's behalf, and grew eloquent in my praises of her goodness and gentleness. He replied, with a smile, that he had not seen her as yet; but that he was given to understand that she was a dangerous character.

My devotion took fire at this epithet, and I launched



out into a long and passionate defence of my unhappy mistress, losing my self-control so completely that at last I actually burst into tears. The Lieutenant-General ordered me to be taken back to my room; and as he saw me led from his presence, the sedate and worthy magistrate shook his head gravely and exclaimed:

“Ah! Love, Love! will you never cease to be at odds with Wisdom?”

CHAPTER XVIII.

I WAS buried in my own gloomy reflections, and meditating over my recent interview with the Lieutenant-General of Police, when I heard the door of my room thrown open, and, looking up, found my father standing before me. Although I was not altogether unprepared to



see him—expecting his arrival, as I did, within a few days—I was so taken aback by his sudden appearance that I would gladly have had the ground open under my feet, and hide me in its depths. I ran to embrace him, conscious, as I did so, that my whole manner was betraying the confusion I felt. He took a seat, neither of us having as yet uttered a word.

Seeing that I remained standing, with my eyes cast down and my head uncovered, he said to me sternly :

“Be seated, sir, be seated. Thanks to the scandal occasioned by your debaucheries and rascalities, I have discovered your place of abode. Talents such as yours have at least one advantage—they cannot long remain hidden under a bushel. You are on the direct road to renown, young sir, and I trust that you will soon reach your goal, the *Grève*,* and there enjoy to the full the glory of being exposed to the admiring gaze of the public!”

I attempted no reply, and he went on: “Little can you conceive the grief of a father who, after lavishing his tenderest affection upon a son, and sparing no pains to make him an honorable man, sees all his care rewarded in the end by that son’s becoming a heartless scoundrel, and bringing disgrace upon his head! The reverses of fortune carry consolation in their train. Time effaces them, and the sorrow they cause gradually fades away. But what remedy is there, alas! for a trial that grows worse as the days go by—such as the profligacy of a vicious son, in whom all sense of honor is dead?”

“You are silent, unhappy boy!” he resumed, after a moment’s pause. “Upon my word, to judge by the mock modesty and hypocritical meekness of your manner, one would suppose that you were the most upright and stainless member of all the race of des Grieux!”

Although I was forced to admit to myself that this tirade was not altogether undeserved, it seemed to me that my father was overstepping the bounds of justice; and I felt that I might fairly be permitted to give frank expression to my thoughts.

“I assure you, sir,” I said, “that the modesty of my bearing before you is not at all affected. It is the natural

* *La Grève*: A public square in Paris, where executions formerly took place.—TRANSLATOR.

demeanor of a well-bred son towards a father for whom he entertains the deepest respect, especially when he is conscious of that father's displeasure. Nor have I any wish to hold myself up as the most virtuous of those who bear our name. I know that I merit your rebukes; but I beseech you to moderate their severity, and not to treat me as though I were the vilest of men. I do not deserve such harsh epithets as those which you have applied to me. Love, as you know, has been the cause of all my errors. Alas! have you never felt the force of that fatal passion? Surely, it cannot be that your blood, from which my own is drawn, has never glowed with a like fire! Love, and love alone, must answer for having made me too tender, too impassioned, too constant, and, perhaps, too compliant, where the wishes of my all-fascinating mistress were concerned. Such are my crimes: is there one of them that does you dishonor? Pray, then, my dear father," I continued affectionately, "pray have some compassion on a son who has never failed in his love and respect for you; who has not bidden farewell, as you suppose, to honor or to duty; and who needs your pity far more than you imagine!"

The tears rose to my eyes as I concluded this appeal.

A father's heart is Nature's masterpiece. It is the realm, so to speak, over which she delights to rule, and its every impulse is under her own immediate ordering. Not only was Nature strong in my father, but he was a man of cultivated taste and intelligence; and the turn which I had given to my expressions of contrition appealed so forcibly to his feelings that he could not disguise the change which they had undergone.

"Come to my arms, my poor son!" he cried; "you have my deepest sympathy!"

I embraced him affectionately, and he pressed me so

closely to his breast that I could feel his heart throbbing with emotion, the nature of which it was easy for me to divine.

“But,” he said, as soon as he was calm enough to speak again, “how are we to obtain your release from this place? Come! tell me frankly exactly how matters stand.”

There was, after all, nothing absolutely dishonorable in my conduct as a whole—judging it, that is, by the standard set up by young men of rank and fashion; nor

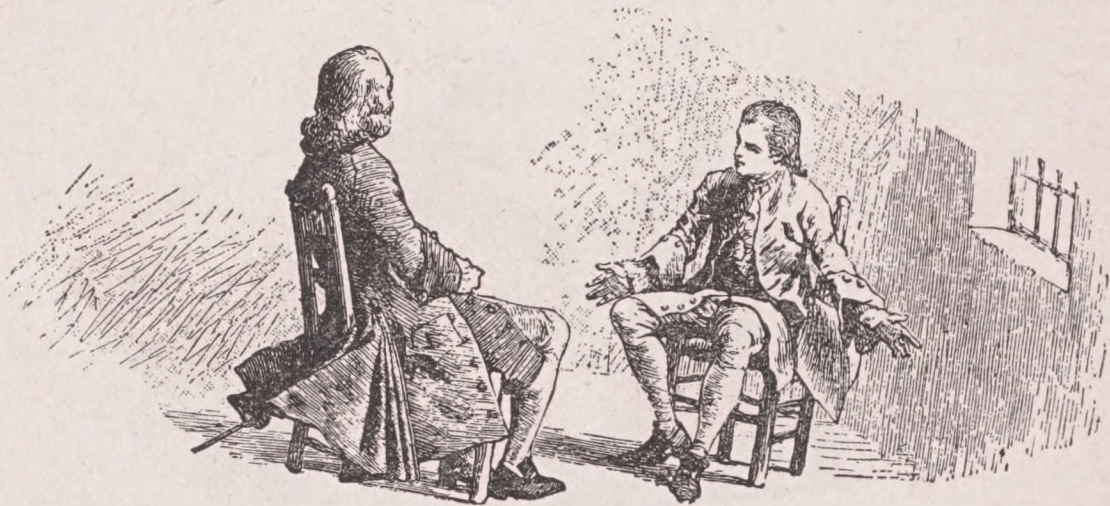


in our day is it regarded as a heinous offence to keep a mistress, any more than it is to resort to a little artifice in order to turn the fortunes of the gaming-table in one's own favor. Arguing thus with myself, I proceeded to give my father a faithful and detailed account of the life I had been leading; taking care to accompany the confession of each fault with an example of a similar delinquency on the part of some well-known personage, in order to diminish the shame of my own transgression.

“I live with a mistress,” said I, “without being united to her by the ties of matrimony; but does not all Paris know that His Grace the Duke of—— keeps *two*, while M. de —— has for ten years past had a mistress whom

he loves with a constancy which he never showed towards his wife? To keep a mistress, in fact, is esteemed a point of honor by two-thirds of the gentry of France. I have cheated a little at cards, but what of that? The Marquis of — and the Count of — derive their whole incomes from that source alone; while the Prince of — and His Grace the Duke of — are the chiefs in a League of ‘Knights’ of the same order.” *

It would have been equally easy for me to prove that I was not without precedents in the matter of my designs



on the purses of the two G—— M——s, but I had too much sense of honor left to allow me to do anything but condemn myself on that point, in common with all those whose examples I might have pleaded. I merely begged my father, therefore, to overlook that fault in consideration of the fact that I had been driven to its commission by two such overmastering passions as Love and Revenge.

He then asked me whether I could suggest any means for him to adopt in order to procure me my liberty as speedily as possible without public scandal. I told him

* i. e., *Chevaliers d'Industrie*.

of the kindly feeling which the Lieutenant-General of Police had manifested towards me.

“The only opposition you are likely to encounter,” said I, “will be on the part of the G—— M——s; so that I think it would be advisable for you to go and see them, if you do not consider it too much trouble.”

He promised to do so. I did not dare to ask him to plead for Manon as well. Not that I lacked the requisite boldness; but I was afraid of irritating him by making



such a suggestion, and inspiring him with some design that might prove disastrous to her and myself.

To this day I am uncertain whether my worst misfortunes were not due to my having yielded to this fear, and having allowed it to prevent me from sounding my father's real feelings and endeavoring to enlist them in favor of my unhappy mistress. I might, perhaps, have succeeded in arousing his pity once more. I might have put him on his guard against the false impressions which he was about to receive, only too willingly, from old G—— M——. Who can tell? My evil destiny might, perhaps, have carried the day in spite of all my efforts; but in that case, at all events, I should have had only the malice of fate

and the cruelty of my enemies to blame for all my unhappiness.

On leaving me, my father paid his promised visit to G—— M——. He found him with his son, whom the Guardsman had duly released. The particulars of their conversation I have never known, but it has been only too easy for me to surmise what the purport of it was, from the tragical results to which it led. They—the two fathers, that is to say—went off together to the Lieuten-



ant-General of Police, of whom they asked two favors. One was that he would order my immediate release from the *Chatelet*; the other, that he would condemn Manon to prison for the rest of her life, or send her out to the penal settlements of America.

Preparations were being made at this very time for the transportation of a number of convicts and vagrants to the Mississippi. The Lieutenant-General promised that Manon should go on the first vessel that was dispatched.

As soon as this matter was settled, M. de G—— M—— and my father came together to inform me that I was once more at liberty.

M. de G—— M——, after courteously assuring me that he bore me no ill-will for what had occurred in the past,

congratulated me upon having such a father as my own, and exhorted me to profit by his teaching and example in the future. My father, on his side, ordered me to apologize to G—— M—— for my intended insult to him and his family, and to thank him for having joined with him in his efforts to obtain my release.

We left the prison together, without a word having been said regarding my mistress. I did not even dare to speak to the turnkeys about her, in their presence.

Alas ! my sorrowful appeals to them that they should treat her kindly would have been vain indeed, had I uttered them. For, with the order that set me free, had come the cruel one concerning her ; and an hour had scarcely passed before the unhappy girl was taken to the *Hôpital*, there to be placed among a band of unfortunates of her own sex, who had been condemned to a similar fate.

My father had compelled me to accompany him to the house in which he was lodging, so that it was nearly six o'clock in the evening before I found an opportunity of eluding his vigilance, and betaking myself once more to the *Châtelet*. My object was merely to take some little delicacies for Manon, and to beg the Warder to have an eye to her comfort ; for I did not entertain any hopes of obtaining permission to see her ; nor had I, as yet, had time to mature any plans for her rescue.

I asked for the Warder. My gratuities and civility of manner had quite won the man's heart, and he was eager to give me some evidence of his good-will. Prompted by this kindly feeling, he began to tell me that he deeply regretted Manon's unfortunate fate, because he was sure that it would be a great grief to me.

I was utterly at a loss as to what he meant, and we went on talking at cross-purposes for some time. At last, seeing that an explanation was necessary, he told

me what I have already told you, at the cost of a pang of horror which this further allusion to the subject only serves to renew.

Never did the swift stroke of paralysis produce a more sudden or more terrible result. I fell prone upon the floor, while my heart gave one throb, so agonizing that, for the instant before I lost all consciousness, I thought that the burden of life was lifted from me forever; nor had this impression entirely faded from my mind when I revived. I let my eyes roam vaguely about the room, and over my



own prostrate form, before I slowly realized that I still retained the unhappy privilege of living.

Unquestionably, had I yielded only to the natural impulse which prompts one to escape from suffering, nothing, in that moment of horror and despair, could have seemed so sweet to me as death. Religion itself could not confront me with the prospect of any torments beyond the grave more intolerable than the cruel throes by which I was already convulsed. And yet, by one of Love's own miracles, I was not long in regaining fortitude enough to offer up my heartfelt thanks to Heaven for having restored me to consciousness and reason. My death

would have been a gain to me alone ; but Manon required that I should live to rescue, to help, and to avenge her. To that task I inwardly vowed that I would devote the whole strength of my being.

The Warder tended me with as much solicitude as though he had been my dearest friend. I accepted his kindly assistance with the deepest gratitude.

“Alas !” I sighed, “my sorrows do, then, move *you* to compassion ! I am abandoned by every one else. My own father, it seems, is one of the most relentless of my



persecutors. Not a soul is there who pities me, except yourself. Yes, you—whose lot is cast in this abode of harshness and inhumanity—you alone show any sympathy for a poor wretch who is the unhappiest of living men !”

He advised me not to venture out into the street until I had recovered a little from the agitation under which I was laboring.

“Nay, nay, let me go !” I answered, as I rose to leave. “You will see me again sooner than you expect. Prepare the darkest of your cells for my reception. I am going to do my best to earn the right to occupy it !”

And, in fact, my first resolve was nothing more nor less than to kill the two G—— M——s and the Lieutenant-

General of Police, and then to make an armed attack upon the *Hôpital* at the head of as many of my friends as I could persuade to take up my grievance. I question even whether my father himself would not have been included in a vengeance that seemed to me more than justifiable; for the Warder had made no secret of the fact that he and G—— M—— were the authors of my impending bereavement.

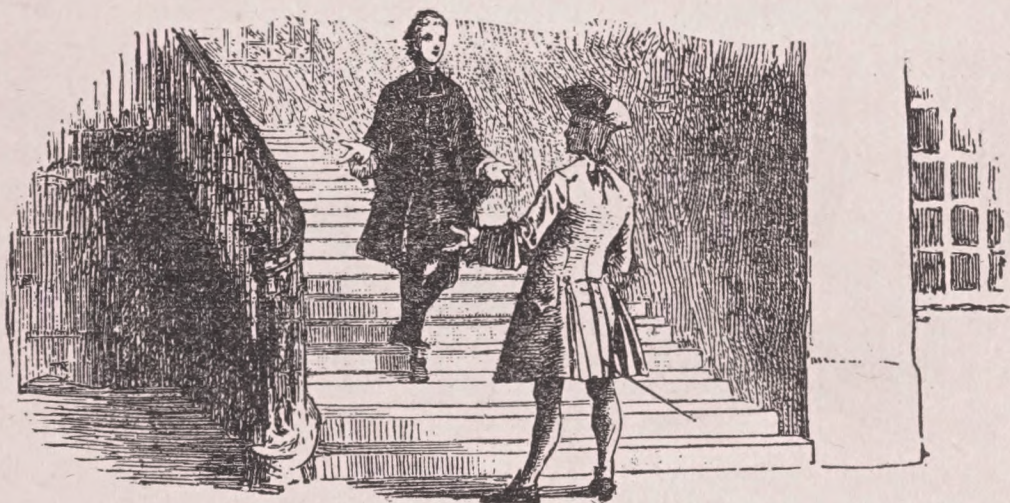
But I had not walked far before the fresh air began to cool my heated brain, and my blind fury gradually gave way to a more reasonable frame of mind. The destruction of our enemies, I reflected, would not be of much benefit to Manon, while it would expose me to the almost certain risk of being deprived of all further power to help her. My very soul revolted, moreover, against the infamy of resorting to assassination. How else, then, could I be revenged?

First I must rescue Manon, and, postponing the consideration of all other matters until I had succeeded in that important task, I summoned every faculty of body and mind to aid me in its accomplishment.

I had but little money left; yet money was the first and most essential requisite in my project. I could think of only three persons from whom I might hope to obtain any—M. de T——, my father, and Tiberge. There seemed but little likelihood of my getting anything from the last two; and I was ashamed to weary the other by my importunities.

But a desperate man cannot afford to indulge in delicate scruples, and I hastened at once to the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, with utter indifference as to whether I was recognized there or not. I asked to see Tiberge. His first words showed me that my latest adventures were as yet unknown to him.

This discovery changed the intention I had entertained of making an appeal to his compassion. I spoke to him in a general way of the pleasure which it had given me to see my father once more, and then begged him to lend me some money, pretending that before leaving Paris I desired to pay some debts, the existence of which I was anxious not to have known. He at once handed me his purse. It contained six hundred francs, of which I took five hundred, offering him my note-of-hand for the amount. This, however, he was too generous to accept.



My next visit was to M. de T——, to whom I confided all my wrongs and misfortunes without reserve. There was not a single detail of them but what he already knew, owing to the pains he had been at to follow up young G—— M——'s adventure to its close. He lent a patient ear to my story, however, and expressed much sympathy for me.

When I asked him for his advice as to how I should set about Manon's rescue, he replied sadly that the prospects of accomplishing it seemed to him so gloomy that, unless Heaven itself intervened by working a miracle on our behalf, he feared that all hope must be abandoned. He had paid a special visit to the *Hôpital* since her incarce-

ration there, and even he had been refused permission to see her—so strict were the orders of the Lieutenant-General of Police. The most crushing blow of all, he added, was that the departure of the unhappy band of which she was to be one was to take place in two days from that time.

My dismay at this information was so great that, had he continued talking for an hour I should not have thought of interrupting him. He went on to say that he had not gone to see me at the *Chatelet*, in order that, by avoiding



any appearance of collusion with me, he might be the better able to render me assistance. During the few hours which had elapsed since my leaving there, he had been much distressed at not knowing where I was to be found; and had been anxious to see me as soon as possible in order to offer me the only suggestion which seemed to hold out any hope of averting Manon's fate. The plan he had to propose was fraught with great danger, and he begged me earnestly never to divulge the fact of his complicity in it. It was to hire a few picked *bravos*, with courage enough to make an attack upon Manon's guards as soon as they reached the outskirts of Paris with their prisoner.

Without waiting for me to make any reference to my

need of money, M. de T—— drew out his purse and handed it to me, saying as he did so :

“There is a thousand francs, which may be of some assistance to you. You can repay me when your fortunes mend. Were it not that the regard which I am forced to have for my reputation forbids my taking part in the rescue of your mistress, you may be sure that I would gladly draw my sword in your service.”

This unbounded generosity moved me almost to the verge of tears, and I thanked him with all the fervor which my affliction had left me capable of expressing.

“Would it be quite hopeless,” I then asked him, “to intercede with the Lieutenant-General of Police?”

“I have thought of that,” he replied ; “but I fear that it would be of no avail. A favor of this kind can only be asked on very good grounds, and I do not quite see what pretext you could allege in your case for petitioning so exalted and powerful an official. The only chance of accomplishing anything in that quarter would be by winning G—— M—— and your father over to your views and persuading them to go to the Lieutenant-General and request him themselves to revoke his sentence.

“I promise you,” concluded M. de T——, “to do my best to gain young G—— M—— over to your interests, although I imagine that he has grown a little cool towards me, in consequence of some suspicions which he has conceived regarding my share in our recent plot against him. And let me urge you to leave nothing undone, on your side, to soften your father’s feelings.”

This was no light undertaking for me ; in saying which I allude not only to the difficulty which I should have experienced in overcoming his opposition in any case, but to another circumstance, which made me even dread to go near him. I had, in short, stolen away from his lodgings

contrary to his express orders, and had firmly resolved, since learning the sad fate that was in store for Manon, that nothing should induce me to return to them.

I had every reason to apprehend that he would keep me there, whether I would or no, and take me back into the country with as little regard for my own wishes. My elder brother had adopted that method with me on a previous occasion. I had grown older since then, it is true; but age is a sorry argument against force. I hit upon a plan, however, by which I could avoid any such



risk. This was to send to my father, under an assumed name, asking him to meet me in some public place. I immediately decided to adopt this course. M. de T—— went to see G——M——, and I repaired to the Luxembourg, whence I despatched a messenger to my father to tell him that a gentleman of his acquaintance was awaiting the honor of an interview with him.

I was afraid that he might find it inconvenient to come, as it was growing late in the evening; but he made his appearance before long, followed by his servant. I requested him to turn into a secluded path, in order that we might be alone together; and we walked on for fully a hundred yards without speaking a word. He was doubtless thinking that all this precaution betokened some matter

of importance, and waited to hear what I had to say, while I was anxiously pondering over the best way to begin. At last I broke the silence.

“You are a good father, sir,” I said, trembling as I spoke. “You have lavished the greatest kindness upon me, and have forgiven me faults beyond number. And, for my own part, I can say before Heaven that no son ever felt more affection or more respect for a parent than I entertain for you. Yet it seems to me—I must own, in fact—that—that—your severity—is——”



“Well, sir, and what of my severity?” interrupted my father, evidently impatient that I should come to the point.

“Ah, sir!” I went on, “it seems to me, I confess, that you have been *too* severe in your treatment of my unhappy Manon. You have taken your ideas of her from M. de G—— M——. His malice has led him to paint her to you in the darkest of colors, and you have formed the most odious conception of her character. Yet never was there a sweeter, a more lovable being! Oh, why did it never please Heaven to inspire you with a wish to see her—if only for one moment? Sure as I am that she is

perfection itself, I am no less sure that you would have thought her so! You would then have taken her part; you would have been filled with loathing for that villain G—— M—— and his base schemes; you would have had compassion on her, and on me. Alas! I am certain of it! Your heart is not so obdurate but that you would have allowed pity to melt it!”

Again he interrupted me, seeing from the fervor with which I was speaking that it would be some time before I came to a conclusion.

“And what, may I ask,” said he, “is to be the upshot of all this impassioned eloquence of yours?”

“To beg you to spare my life,” I replied; “for that moment must be my last which sees Manon sail for America!”

“Enough of this, sir!” said he sternly; “I would rather, far rather, that you took leave of life than of virtue and honor!”

“Then why go further?” I cried, seizing him by the arm and holding him back. “Rid me here and at once of this life that is but a hateful burden to me; for you have filled me with such despair that death would be the greatest boon you could confer upon me; and it is a gift worthy of a father’s hand!”

“I shall not give it, though you well deserve it,” was his response. “I know many a father who long ere this would have meted out justice to you with his own hands; but it is my excessive leniency that has been your ruin!”

I threw myself at his feet.

“Oh! if you have any of that leniency remaining,” I implored, as I clung to his knees, “do not harden your heart against the son who lies weeping before you now! Your son—yes, think of that! Think of my mother, alas! whom you loved so tenderly! Would you have

suffered her to be torn from your arms? Nay! you would have defended her to the very death! And do you suppose that others have not hearts of their own, as you have? Surely that breast cannot be utterly inhuman which has once known the sweetness of love and the bitterness of grief!"

"Do not dare to utter your mother's name again!" he exclaimed angrily. "You but add to my indignation by alluding to her memory! Sorrow at your debaucheries would have killed her, had she been alive to witness them.



We have talked enough. I am in no humor to listen to more of your ravings—and nothing you can say will make me alter the resolution I have formed. I am now going back to my lodgings, and I order you to come with me."

The sharp and peremptory tone in which he uttered this command showed only too clearly that his heart was inflexible. I drew back a few paces, fearing that it might occur to him to lay hands upon me himself, and force me to accompany him.

"Do not increase my despair," I said to him, "by compelling me to disobey you. It is impossible for me to go with you, just as it is impossible for me to live any longer after the cruel treatment which I have experienced at

your hands. I bid you, therefore, an eternal farewell. The news of my death, which you will soon receive," I added bitterly, "may perchance revive in your breast some of a father's feelings towards me!"

As I turned away, he cried, in a voice that fairly trembled with passion :

"So you refuse to follow me? Then go! Go to your ruin! Farewell, ungrateful and rebellious boy!"

"Farewell!" I retorted, in a transport of rage and grief, "farewell, most unnatural and inhuman of fathers!"

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING the Luxembourg, I rushed like a madman through the streets to M. de T——'s house. As I went along I raised my eyes to heaven and lifted my hands in supplication to the Almighty Powers above, crying aloud in my anguish: "O God! surely thou wilt not prove as pitiless as man! Thine aid is now my only hope!"



M. de T—— had not yet returned home, but he arrived before I had waited many minutes. He told me with a rueful face that his efforts at mediation had met with no better success than my own. Young G—— M——, although less incensed than his father against Manon and myself, was yet unwilling to attempt any intercession

with him on our behalf. His excuse was that he was himself afraid of the vindictive old man, who had already flown into a violent passion with him while reprimanding him on the subject of his intended intrigue with Manon.

Thus, my only remaining course was to resort to violent measures, such as M. de T—— had indicated; and on the success of these I built my last hopes—hopes, as I told him, that were very slender at best, but in one of which I found certainty and consolation; and that was, that should I fail, I should at least perish in the attempt. I begged him to aid me to the extent of offering up his prayers for my success, and then left him, with all my thoughts centred on the one object of finding associates into whom I might be able to infuse something, if only a single spark, of my own courage and determination.

The first person who occurred to my mind was the Guardsman whom I had employed to abduct G—— M——. I further resolved to go and claim his hospitality for the night, as my mind had been too much preoccupied all the afternoon to allow of my securing a lodging for myself.

I found him alone. He expressed his pleasure at seeing me out of the *Chatelet* and at liberty once more, and warmly offered me his services. I explained to him how he could indeed be of assistance to me. He had good sense enough to appreciate all the difficulties of the proposed attempt; but he was also generous enough to undertake to surmount them.

We spent part of the night in discussing my project. He mentioned the three soldiers of the Guards whom he had hired to aid him on the last occasion, as *bravos* of proved mettle. M. de T—— had furnished me with exact information as to the number of Archers who were detailed to escort Manon on the journey. There were only

six of them. Five bold and resolute men were enough to strike terror into the hearts of these miserable hirelings, who are utterly incapable of defending themselves gallantly when their cowardice can find a way of shirking the dangers of combat.

As I was plentifully supplied with money, my friend the Guardsman advised me to grudge nothing that might help to insure the success of our attack.

“We must have horses,” said he, “and pistols, as well as a carbine for each of us. I will make it my business

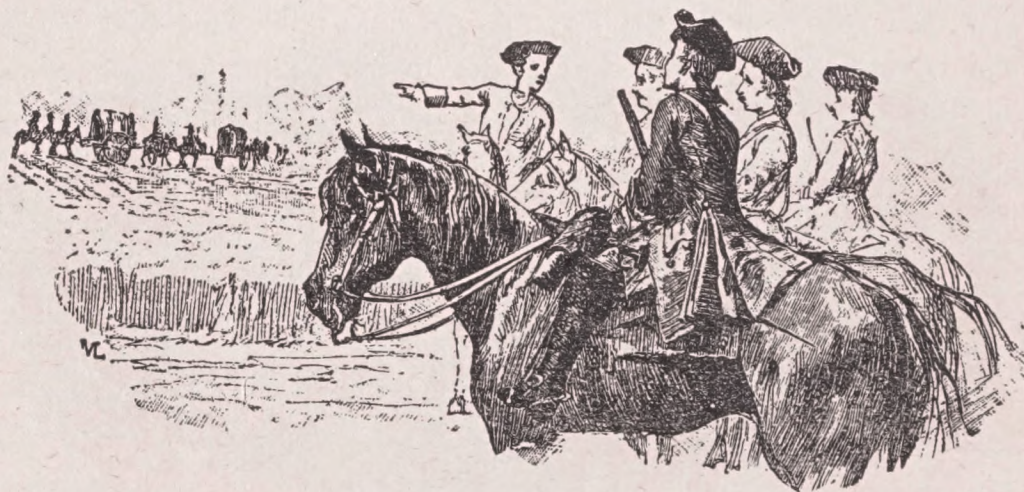


to attend to all these preparations to-morrow. Three suits of civilians' clothes will be necessary, too, for our soldiers, who would not dare, in an affair of this sort, to appear in the uniform of their regiment.”

I entrusted him with the hundred *pistoles* which I had obtained from M. de T——, and they were spent the next day, to the last farthing. The three soldiers were brought up for my inspection. I fired their zeal by liberal promises of reward, and, in order to gain their complete confidence, I began by making each of them a present of ten *pistoles*.

The day having arrived for the execution of my project, I despatched one of the soldiers to the *Hôpital* at an early

hour in the morning, with instructions to ascertain to a moment the time of the Archers' departure with their prisoners. Although it was only my excessive anxiety and prudence which prompted me to take this precaution, it turned out to have been absolutely necessary ; for, relying upon false information which had been given me as to their route, I had intended to lie in wait for the ill-fated band on the Orleans road, under the impression that they were to embark at La Rochelle. Had I done so, all my trouble would have been thrown away, for, as I learnt



from the soldier's report, they were taking the road to Normandy, and it was from Havre-de-Grace that they were to sail for America.

We hastened at once to the Porte St. Honoré, taking care to approach it by different streets, and rejoining one another at the end of the *Faubourg*. Our horses were fresh, and we were not long in coming up with the six Archers and the two wretched wagons which you saw at Passy two years ago.

This spectacle so unmanned me that my strength and consciousness almost deserted me.

“O Fortune !” I cried, “cruel Fortune, grant me now at least either victory or death !”

We held a hasty consultation as to what should be our

mode of attack. The Archers were barely four hundred yards ahead of us, and in order to cut them off we had only to cross a small field that was skirted by the high-road which they were following.

The Guardsman was in favor of adopting this course, and so surprising them by a sudden onslaught.

Such was my own view, and, setting spurs to my horse, I led the way. But Fortune, alas! had pitilessly rejected my prayers. Seeing five horsemen galloping towards them, the Archers at once concluded that it was with



the object of attacking them. Fixing their bayonets and looking to the locks of their muskets, they prepared to defend themselves without a sign of flinching.

At this sight, which served but to fire the Guardsman and myself with redoubled ardor, the courage of our three dastardly companions suddenly forsook them. They halted as if by mutual consent, whispered a few words among themselves which I could not overhear, and then turned their horses' heads and made back, at full gallop, along the road to Paris.

“Curse the rascals!” exclaimed the Guardsman, who seemed to be as much aghast as myself at this infamous

desertion : “ What is to be done ? We are now but two against six ! ”

I was speechless with rage and amazement. Reining in my horse, I hesitated as to whether my first acts of vengeance should not be the pursuit and chastisement of the treacherous cowards who were thus abandoning me. I gazed after them as they fled, and then glanced in the other direction at the Archers. Had I possessed the power of doubling my own being, I should have fallen simultaneously upon these objects of my fury, and dealt out one common death to them all.

My indecision betrayed itself to the Guardsman by the restless wandering of my eyes, and he begged me to listen to his advice.

“ Now that there are only two of us,” said he, “ it would be madness for us to attack six men, as well armed as ourselves, and who seem prepared to offer a stubborn resistance. There is nothing for it but to return to Paris, and try to be more successful in the choice of our followers. The Archers will not be able to make very rapid progress on their journey, with two heavy carts to retard them ; and we shall have no difficulty in overtaking them again to-morrow.”

I pondered over this suggestion for a few moments ; but I could see nothing but despair confronting me at every turn, and I came to a resolution which no one, in truth, but a desperate man could have formed. This was, to thank my companion for his friendly services, and then, so far from attacking the Archers, to go, instead, and humbly beg them to let me join their party ; my object being to accompany Manon as far as Havre-de-Grace with them, and then to cross the ocean with her.

“ I meet with persecution or betrayal on every hand,” I said to the Guardsman ; “ there is not a soul whom I can

trust. I despair of any further aid from Fortune or from man. I have reached the climax of my sorrows, and all that remains for me is to resign myself to them and to close my eyes, as I now do, to every gleam of hope. May Heaven reward you for your kindness to me ! Farewell ! I am going to help my evil destiny to consummate my ruin, by hurrying to meet it of my own free-will ! ”

He endeavored in vain to persuade me to return to Paris. I entreated him to allow me to carry out my resolve, and to leave me at once, lest the Archers might still imagine that we intended to attack them.



I rode slowly towards them, alone, and with such a dejection mirrored in my face, that they had no reason for being alarmed at my approach. In spite of this, they continued to stand on the defensive. “ Be under no apprehension, my good sirs,” I said, as I drew near them ; “ I do not come as an enemy, but as a suppliant.” Then, requesting them to resume their journey without distrust, I told them, as we went along, the favors which I hoped they would grant me. They consulted together as to how they should receive my propositions. Finally the Archer in command, acting as spokesman for the others, told me in reply that they had received orders

of the strictest kind to keep a close watch over their prisoners ; but that, to oblige such a gallant young gentleman as I seemed to be, he and his companions would consent to be a little lax in their duty ; on the understanding, of course, that I was to pay something for the privilege. I had about fifteen *pistoles* left, and told them frankly how much my purse contained.

“ Well,” said the Archer, “ we’ll not be extortionate in our demands upon it. It shall cost you only a crown an hour to enjoy the company of whichever of our girls here



is most to your liking. 'Tis no more than the regular price in Paris.”

I had not alluded to Manon in particular, because I did not wish them to know of my passion for her. They at first supposed that it was merely a young man’s passing whim which led me to seek a little diversion with these unfortunates ; but no sooner did they begin to suspect that I was in love, than they increased their exactions to such an extent that my purse was empty by the time we left Mantes, where we had slept the night before we reached Passy.

Do you ask me to tell you on what mournful themes Manon and I conversed during that journey, or to describe

my feelings on beholding her, when I had obtained permission from her guards to approach the wagon in which she lay? Ah, my friend! words, at best, do but feebly express the emotions of the heart! But picture to yourself my unhappy mistress, with a chain around her waist, reclining upon a few scanty handfuls of straw and wearily resting her head against the side of the cart, her face pale, and moistened by the tears which forced their way from beneath her lashes, and streamed down her cheeks, although she kept her eyes constantly closed. She had



not even had the curiosity to open them on hearing the commotion among her guards when they expected our attack. Her linen garments were soiled and bedraggled, her delicate hands exposed to the rude air; in short, she, the embodiment of every charm—she, with that face which was lovely enough to lead the whole world back to idolatry—now presented a spectacle of such wretchedness and desolation as no language can describe. For some time I rode beside the cart, gazing at her sadly, and so overcome with anguish at the sight that more than once I all but fell headlong from my horse.

My sighs and repeated ejaculations of grief at length attracted her attention. Glancing up, she recognized me;

and I noticed that, yielding to her first impulse, she attempted to leap from the cart towards me, but, the chain dragging her back, she sank into her former attitude.

I begged the Archers, in the name of mercy, to stop for a moment; but only when I had appealed to their cupidity did they consent to do so. I dismounted from my horse and seated myself at Manon's side. She was so enfeebled and exhausted that for a long time she could not open her lips to speak to me, or even make a sign with her hands. Meanwhile I bathed those dear hands with



my tears, unable, myself, to utter a single word; and thus we sat together, in as pitiable a condition as ever fell to the lot of two unhappy mortals. Nor were our words less sad when at last we regained the power of speech.

Manon said but little. Her misery and humiliation seemed to have wrought a change in the very organs of her voice, and its tone was tremulous and feeble as she expressed her gratitude to me for not having forgotten her, and for granting her, as she added with a sigh, the consolation of seeing me once again and bidding me a last farewell. But on my protesting to her that no power on earth could tear me from her side, and that I was resolved to

follow her to the very end of the world, that I might watch over her, tend her, love her, and link my miserable destiny forever with her own, the poor girl gave way to such transports of grief and affection that I trembled lest the violence of her emotions might endanger her life itself.

All the agitation of her heart seemed to concentrate itself in her eyes, which she kept intently fixed upon my face. Every now and again she would commence a sentence, and, lacking strength to complete it, the words would die away upon her lips. The few to which she



succeeded in giving utterance were expressions of admiring wonder at my devotion, and tender protests against the lengths to which I was carrying it; mingled with murmurs of surprise that she should be fortunate enough to have inspired me with so matchless a love, and earnest entreaties that I would renounce my intention of accompanying her, and seek elsewhere the happiness I deserved and which, she said, I could never hope to enjoy with her.

In spite of the cruelty of Fate, I found my long-sought happiness in her tender gaze, and in the certainty I now felt that I possessed her love. I had, indeed, forfeited all

that other men hold dear ; but I was master of Manon's heart, the one possession that I prized. What cared I whether my remaining days were to be passed in Europe or America ? Little did the place of my abode matter to me, as long as it insured me the happiness of living with my beloved mistress. Is not the whole wide world home and country for two faithful lovers ? Do they not find in one another parents, kindred, friends—all riches and all joys ?

If there were anything that caused me anxiety, it was the dread of seeing Manon exposed to privations and want. I imagined myself already with her in some wild and uncultivated region, inhabited only by savages. “ There can be none, even there,” thought I, “ as cruel as my father and G—— M—— ; of that I am convinced. They will at least allow us to live in peace. If the accounts we read of them are to be believed, they obey the laws of Nature. The passion of avarice, to which G—— M—— is a slave, and the fantastic notions of honor which have made my own father my enemy, are alike unknown to them. They will not molest two lovers whose lives, as they will see, are as simple as their own.”

I had thus no fears upon that point ; but I indulged in no romantic fancies with respect to the common necessities of life. I had only too often been brought face to face with the fact that there are some privations which are unendurable, especially by a delicate girl who has been accustomed to a life of ease and abundance. I was in despair to think that I had been forced to part with my money so uselessly, and that even what little I had left would soon be extorted from me by the rascally greed of the Archers ; for I thought that, with a small sum in my possession, I might have hoped, not only to ward off destitution for some time in America, where money was

scarce, but even to establish myself in some business there which would secure me a permanent footing.

As a result of these reflections, it occurred to me to write to Tiberge, whom I had ever found ready to lend me his friendly assistance. I wrote from the first town through which we passed. I did not use any pretext to disguise my real motive in making the request; but simply pleaded the pressing need of money which I foresaw that I should be in on my arrival at Havre-de-Grace, whither, I told



him frankly, I was accompanying Manon. I asked him for a hundred *pistoles*.

“Send the money to me,” I said, “through the Postmaster at Havre. You will readily understand that this is the last time I shall trespass upon your kindness, and that, now that my ill-fated mistress is being torn from me forever, I cannot bear to let her go without some small comforts which, in mitigating the hardships of her lot, will also help to console the bitterness of my grief.”

The Archers, as soon as they became aware of the violence of my passion, grew so rapacious in their extortions that, by continually doubling the price of their slightest favors, they soon left me absolutely penniless. The dic-

tates of love, moreover, forbade my husbanding my money. From morning till night I was at Manon's side, oblivious of everything else, and my time was no longer measured by the hour, but by whole days.

When, at last, my purse was quite empty, I found myself exposed to all the whims and brutality of these six ruffians, who treated me with insufferable insolence, such as you yourself witnessed at Passy. My meeting with you was a happy respite that Fortune granted me for a short time. Your compassion at the sight of my sufferings was the only claim that I had upon your generous heart. The assistance which you so liberally extended me enabled me to reach Havre, and the Archers kept their promise with better faith than I had expected of them.

On our arrival at Havre, I went at once to the Post-office. There had not as yet been time for Tiberge to answer my letter. I made careful inquiries as to how soon I might expect his reply, and found that it could not possibly arrive for another two days. By one of those strange fatalities which my luckless destiny ever had in store for me, it happened that our vessel was to sail on the morning of the very day when the post that I was so anxiously awaiting would come in. Words fail to describe my despair at this intelligence.

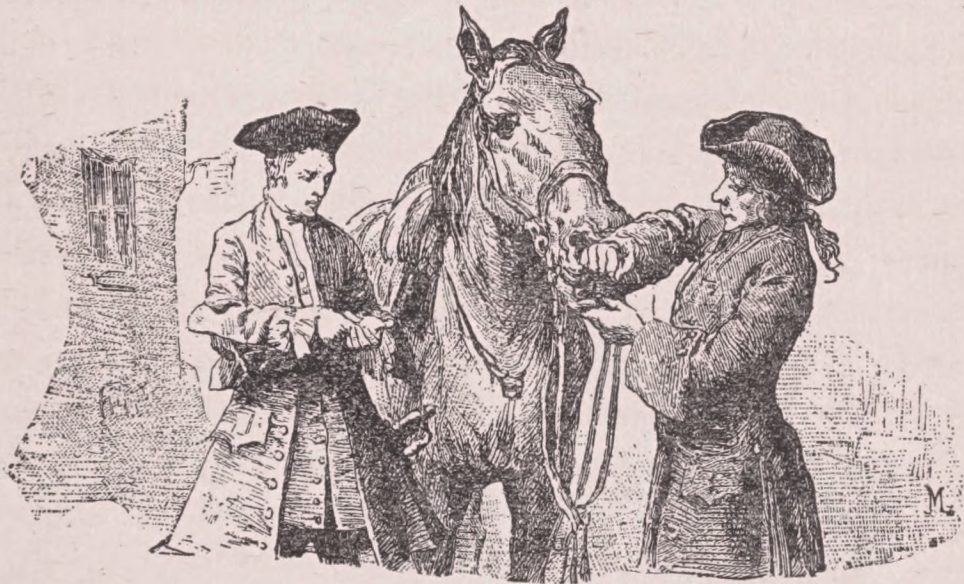
"Must it ever be thus?" I cried; "must I be always singled out for extremes, even in my misfortunes?"

"Alas!" was Manon's response, "such unhappy lives as ours are surely not worth the pains we take to preserve them! Let us die here, at Havre, dear Chevalier! Let us end our miseries at once and forever in the grave! Why carry the heavy burden of our woes to an unknown land, where the most horrible sufferings doubtless await us, since it has been chosen as a place of punishment for me. Yes, let us die!" she again besought me; "or do you,

at least, put me to death, and then seek a happier lot in the arms of some more fortunate mistress !”

“Nay, nay, sweet soul !” I replied ; “I ask no better fate than to be allowed to share your misfortunes.”

Her words made me tremble, for I feared that her spirit had been crushed under the weight of her afflictions. I forced myself to assume a more hopeful manner, in order to dispel from her mind these melancholy thoughts of death and despair. I resolved to keep to the same course in future ; and subsequent events served to teach



me that nothing is more calculated to inspire a woman with courage than dauntless fortitude in the man she loves.

When I had lost all hope of receiving assistance from Tiberge, I sold my horse. The proceeds of that transaction, added to what remained of your generous gift, put me in possession of the small sum of seventeen *pistoles*. Seven of these I laid out in the purchase of some necessary comforts for Manon ; the other ten I carefully put by, to serve as the foundation of our hopes and fortune in America.

I had no difficulty in obtaining permission to join the ship. At that time the authorities were glad to find young men who were willing to go out and settle in the Colony, and my passage and provisions were granted me free of cost.

The mail for Paris was to leave the following day, and I took advantage of the fact to post a letter to Tiberge. It was a touching epistle, and must have moved him deeply; for it inspired him with a resolve that could only have originated in a heart that was filled with an infinite wealth of generous sympathy for an unhappy friend.

CHAPTER XX.

WE set sail, and were fortunate enough to have favorable winds throughout the entire passage. I succeeded in persuading the Captain to assign a separate cabin to Manon and myself. He was good enough to make a distinction between us and the common herd of our wretched



associates. Before a day had passed, I took him aside and confided part of my unhappy story to him, in the hope of securing considerate treatment at his hands. I did not feel that I was guilty of any very atrocious falsehood in telling him that I was married to Manon. He pretended to believe it, and took me under his special protection, evi-

dences of which we received during the whole voyage. He took care that we had good food; and the marked attentions which he showed us resulted in our being treated with the utmost respect by our companions in misery.

I made it my constant study to save Manon from suffering the slightest discomfort. My efforts to this end did not escape her observation; and her recognition of them, together with her deep sense of the extraordinary sacrifices which I had made for her sake, rendered her so tender and devoted, so full of solicitude on her side concerning my most trifling wants, that there grew up between us an incessant emulation in kindly offices and loving attentions to one another.

I felt no regret at having left Europe. On the contrary, the nearer we drew to America the more did I feel my heart expand and fill with a sense of peace. Could I have been certain that when we arrived there, we should not lack the absolute necessities of life, I should have thanked Fortune for having given so happy a turn to all our troubles.

After a voyage of two months' duration, we at last came in sight of the long-looked-for shores.

The aspect of the country, as we gazed upon it for the first time, presented no inviting features to our eyes. Nothing was to be seen but a wide sweep of barren and uninhabited plain, dotted here and there with a scanty growth of reeds and a few trees, with branches stripped bare by the wind. There was not a trace of either animals or human beings.

However, the Captain ordered several of the ship's cannon to be discharged, and shortly afterwards we descried a number of the citizens of New Orleans running towards us with lively demonstrations of joy. We had

not observed the town, which is hidden by a low hill on the side from which we had approached it.

We were welcomed as though we were visitors from heaven. Thronging eagerly around us, the poor colonists besieged us with questions concerning the state of France and the various provinces in which they had been born. They embraced us affectionately, as brothers and as beloved comrades who had come to share the miseries and loneliness of their exile.

We walked with them towards New Orleans ; but, as



we drew near to it, we were surprised to discover that what had been hitherto cried up to us as a town of no mean proportions, was, in reality, nothing but a collection of a few wretched huts, inhabited by some five or six hundred persons. The Governor's residence was a little distinguished from the others by its superior height and situation. It stood within some earthwork fortifications, around which ran a wide ditch or intrenchment. We were first taken to pay our respects to him. He conferred with the Captain for some time in private, and then, advancing towards us, he carefully scanned the women who had come by our ship, one after another. There were thirty in all ; for at Havre we had found another band of them

who had joined our own. After a long inspection of them, the Governor sent for a number of the young men of the town who were anxious to have wives, and assigned the comeliest girls to the leading ones among them, while lots were cast for the rest. He had not, as yet, spoken to Manon, but when he ordered the others to withdraw, he told us both to remain.

“The Captain informs me,” he then said, “that you are married, and that he became convinced during the voyage that you are both persons of superior intelligence and



worth. I will not enter now into the question of what has brought you to your present pass; but if you are, in truth, as well-bred as your appearance would indicate, I shall spare no pains to mitigate the hardships of your lot; while you, for your part, can do much towards rendering my life in this wild and desolate spot less disagreeable than it has hitherto been.”

I replied in such terms as I thought best calculated to confirm the impression which he had formed of us. He gave directions that a lodging should be prepared for us in the town, and then invited us to remain and take supper with him.

His manners, I thought, were remarkably courteous

for a man who was, at best, only the chief of a wretched band of exiles. While there were others present, he studiously refrained from asking us any questions regarding the leading incidents of our story. The conversation was of a general nature, and, despite our heavy hearts, Manon and I did our best to help in making it agreeable and amusing.

In the evening the Governor had us conducted to the dwelling which had been prepared for us. This we found to be a miserable hut, roughly constructed of logs and



clay, and consisting of two or three rooms on the ground floor, with a garret overhead. It had been furnished, by his orders, with five or six chairs, and a few of the commonest necessities of life.

The sight of this sorry abode seemed to dismay poor Manon sadly. Her distress was on my account far more than on her own. No sooner were we left alone together than she sat down and began to weep bitterly. At first I endeavored to console her, but when she admitted that she was grieving only for my sake, and that her sole thought, in our common misfortunes, was of how much I had to suffer, I quickly assumed an air of such confi-

dence and even cheerfulness as, I hoped, might serve to encourage her.

“Why should I complain?” I said to her: “I possess all that I ever desired. You love me, dearest, do you not? What greater happiness have I ever asked for than that? Let us trust the guidance of our fortunes to Providence. They do not appear to me to be in such a very desperate plight, after all. The Governor seems a kind and obliging man. He has already shown a disposition to befriend us, and he will not, I am sure, allow us to



suffer from absolute want. As for this poor cabin and its rude furniture, comfortless as they are, you may have noticed that there seem to be but few persons here who are better housed or furnished than ourselves; and besides,” I added, with a kiss, “you are the most wonderful of alchemists: you transform all things into gold!”

“Then you shall be the richest man in all the world,” she replied; “for, as there never yet was love like yours, so it is impossible for man to be loved more tenderly than you are loved by me. I am not blind to my own faults,” she continued. “I am well aware that I have never been

worthy of the matchless devotion you have shown me. I have vexed and grieved you so that you could never have forgiven me, had it not been for your infinite affection and forbearance. I have been thoughtless and fickle; and, even while loving you, as I have always done, passionately and almost to distraction, I have shown you nothing but the basest ingratitude. But a change has come over me; how great a change you can scarcely conceive. The tears which you have so often seen me shed since our departure from France have not once been called forth by my own misfortunes. *They* ceased to distress me from the moment when you began to share them with me. I wept only out of love and compassion for you. I am inconsolable to think that I should have caused you a single moment's pain in all my life. Incessantly do I reproach myself for my infidelities, and bow my heart in contrition as I marvel at the sacrifices which love has inspired you to make for the sake of a miserable girl who has been so little worthy of them, and who," she concluded, with a flood of tears, "though she were to lay down her very life, could never fully repay you for one half of the pangs which she has caused you."

Her tears, her words, the tone in which she uttered them, all combined to make such a powerful impression upon me, that I felt my heart throbbing as if it would leap from my bosom.

"Have a care!" I said to her, "have a care, my dearest Manon! Such fervent expressions of your love are more than my poor strength can bear; for rapturous joy like this is an unaccustomed sensation to me. Kind Heaven!" I then exclaimed, "I have now nothing more to ask of you. Manon's heart is mine—mine beyond all fear or doubt; mine, as I have longed for it to be that I might be completely happy! Come what may now, noth-

ing can shake my happiness : it is firmly established from this day forward ! ”

“ It is, indeed,” she responded, “ if it depends upon me ; and well do I know where my own happiness is always to be found.”

I retired to rest with my mind filled with these delightful thoughts, which transformed my humble cabin into a palace fit for the proudest monarch on earth. Thenceforth America was, in my eyes, an abode of perfect bliss.

“ Whoever would taste the true delights of love,” I



would often say to Manon, “ should come to New Orleans. Here it is that the tender passion holds its sway, unruffled by self-interest, by jealousy, or by inconstancy. Our fellow-countrymen come to these shores in quest of gold : little do they dream of the far more precious treasures which we have discovered here ! ”

We carefully cultivated the Governor’s friendship ; and a few weeks after our arrival he was kind enough to appoint me to an unimportant post which had recently become vacant in the fort. Humble as it was, I accepted it as a godsend ; for it enabled me to earn an independent livelihood. I hired a man-servant for myself, and a maid for Manon, and set about regulating our affairs in keeping

with our modest income. My way of life was blameless and exemplary, and Manon's was no less so. We lost no opportunity of serving our neighbors and doing them acts of kindness. This obliging disposition on our part, and the amiability of our manners, gained us the confidence and affection of the whole colony, and we advanced so rapidly in the general esteem that we soon ranked as the leading persons in the town, after the Governor.

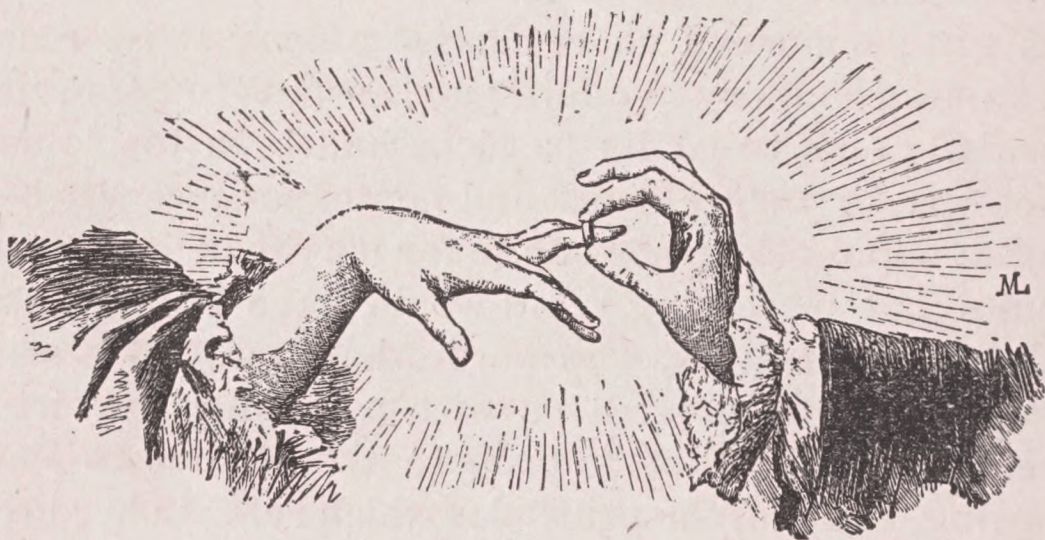
The innocence of our occupations and the undisturbed tranquillity of our lives served insensibly to revive our early feelings of piety. Manon had never been an irreligious girl; nor was I to be classed among those reckless libertines who glory in adding godlessness to depravity of morals. Youth and its passions had been to blame for all our past transgressions, and now experience was beginning to supply the place of age for us, producing the same results that increasing years would have brought about.

Our conversations, which were habitually of a serious turn, gradually inspired us with a longing for virtuous love. I was the first to propose this change to Manon, knowing, as I did, the principles which ruled in her breast. She was upright and sincere in all her sentiments; and these are qualities which invariably predispose their possessor towards virtue. I explained to her that there was one thing lacking to make our happiness complete, "and that," said I, "is the approval of Heaven. We are both of us too high-minded and pure-hearted to be content to live on in the voluntary violation of our plain duty. We did so live in France, I own; and there it was excusable; for it was impossible for us to cease to love one another, and equally so for us to satisfy our passion legitimately. But in America, where we have no one to consult but ourselves, where we need no longer pay any heed to the arbitrary decrees of rank and conventional usage, where

we are even supposed to be married already, what is there to prevent our soon actually becoming so, and thus consecrating our love by the vows to which religion lends its sanction? "As for myself," I added, "I offer you nothing new in offering you my heart and hand; but I am ready to ratify the gift at the foot of the altar."

My words seemed to fill her with joy.

"Believe me," she said, "I have thought of this a thousand times since we came to America. The fear of displeasing you has made me lock the wish as a secret



in my own heart; for I feel that it would be presumption on my part to aspire to the honor of being your wife."

"My wife!" replied I; "why, Manon, you should soon be a queen had it been my fate to be born a king. Let us hesitate no longer; we have no obstacles to dread. I will speak of the matter to the Governor this very day, and confess that we have hitherto been deceiving him. Let vulgar natures be deterred by the indissolubility of the marriage tie; they would not fear it were they sure, as we are, of its never being other than a bond of love."

Manon was in raptures of delight when I left her, after this expression of my resolve. I am convinced that my

intentions would have commended themselves to the approval of any man of honor, considering the circumstances in which I was placed; hopelessly enslaved, that is to say, by a passion which it was beyond my power to conquer, and assailed by a remorse which I should have done wrong to stifle. Can any one, then, accuse me of murmuring without just cause when I bewail the harshness of Providence in spurning a design which I had formed only in the thought of pleasing it? In spurning it, do I say? Alas! it punished it as though it had been a crime! Strange! Heaven had borne with me patiently while I was rushing blindfold along the high-road of vice, and reserved its severest chastisement for the hour when I should seek to return to the path of virtue! I almost fear that my strength will fail me before I can finish this recital of the saddest events that ever fell to the experience of man!

I waited upon the Governor, as I had arranged with Manon, to obtain his consent to the solemnization of our marriage. I would gladly have avoided mentioning the subject to him, or to any one else, could I have been sure that his chaplain, who was then the only priest in the town, would have rendered me this service without his knowledge; but as I did not dare to hope that he would promise to keep it a secret, I had determined to act openly in the matter.

The Governor had a nephew, named Synnelet, for whom he entertained the deepest affection. This Synnelet was thirty years of age, and a man of honor and spirit, but violent and headstrong in temper. He was unmarried. Manon's beauty had made an impression upon him from the day of our first arrival; and the numerous opportunities he had had of seeing her during the nine or ten months which had gone by since then, had so inflamed his

passion that he was secretly pining to possess her. As he supposed, however, in common with his uncle and all the people of the town, that I was really her husband, he had mastered his love so far as to let no signs of it escape him ; and had even given evidence of a warm friendship for me on several occasions when it had been in his power to serve me.

I found him with his uncle when I reached the fort. I had no reason for keeping him in ignorance of my inten-



tions ; and consequently spoke out freely, without raising any objections to his being present. The Governor listened to me with his usual kindness. I told him part of the story of my life, which he heard with interest ; and when I asked him to favor me by his presence at the coming ceremony he was generous enough to insist upon being allowed to defray all the expenses of the wedding festivities. I took my leave in the happiest frame of mind imaginable.

An hour afterwards I received a visit from the chaplain. I supposed that he had come to give me some instructions concerning my marriage ; but, after greeting me coldly, he informed me abruptly that the Governor commanded me to abandon all further idea of it, as he had other views for Manon.

“Other views for Manon!” I exclaimed, as my heart sank within me: “and what may those views be, your reverence?”

“As you are well aware,” he replied, “the Governor is master here, and, Manon having been sent out from France for the benefit of the colony, it is for him to dispose of her as he thinks fit. He has not done so as yet, because he believed her to be married; but now that he has learned from your own lips that she is not, he has



decided to give her to M. Synnelet, who is in love with her.”

At this my hot indignation got the better of my prudence. I haughtily ordered the chaplain out of my house, vowing the while that if the Governor, or Synnelet, or the whole town together, should dare to lay hands on my wife or my mistress, whichever they chose to call her, they would do so at their peril.

I then hastened to acquaint Manon with the terrible message which I had just received. We came to the conclusion that Synnelet must have worked upon his uncle's mind since my return, and that it was all the outcome of a long premeditated design on his part.

What were we to do? They had power on their side; we were helpless. Had we been in mid-ocean instead of

at New Orleans, we could not have been more completely isolated, separated as we were from the rest of the world by countless leagues on every hand. Whither could we flee, in a land of which we knew nothing save that it was a lonely wilderness, inhabited, if at all, by ferocious beasts and by savages as inhuman as themselves?

I was esteemed by the townspeople, but I could not hope to stir up their sympathies in my behalf sufficiently to enable me to count upon their rendering me such assistance as would meet the exigencies of my case. To accom-



plish that, money was necessary; and I was poor. Moreover, the success of a popular uprising was more than doubtful, and, had fortune failed us in the attempt, we should have been irretrievably ruined.

All these thoughts passed in quick succession through my mind. Some of them I imparted to Manon, and then, without heeding her reply, plunged into a new train of reflection. No sooner had I come to one decision than I threw it aside to adopt another. I talked to myself, answering aloud the suggestions of my own mind, and, in short, was in a state of agitation which no comparison I can think of will help me to describe, so utterly did it

transcend anything I have ever experienced before or since.

Manon was observing me closely all the while, and read, in the troubled expression of my face, the full extent of our danger. More alarmed on my account than on her own, the affectionate girl did not even dare to give free expression to her fears.

After long and anxious reflection, I at last resolved to go to the Governor and make an effort to move him by appealing to his sense of honor, and to the remembrance of my unvarying respect for him and of the friendship he had hitherto professed for me.

Manon tried her best to dissuade me from my purpose.

“You are rushing to certain death,” she said, with tears in her eyes; “they will murder you, and I shall never see you again. If you must die, I will die first!”

Only after much persuasion did I succeed in convincing her that it was absolutely necessary that I should go and that she should remain at home. I promised her that I would not be absent long. Little did we either of us dream that it was she herself who was to be the victim of the whole wrath of Heaven and the cruel rancor of our enemies.

CHAPTER XXI.

I WENT to the fort, where I found the Governor in company with his chaplain. In the hope of touching his feelings, I stooped to such abject supplications as would have made me die of shame, had I been guilty of uttering them in any other cause. I appealed to him in the name

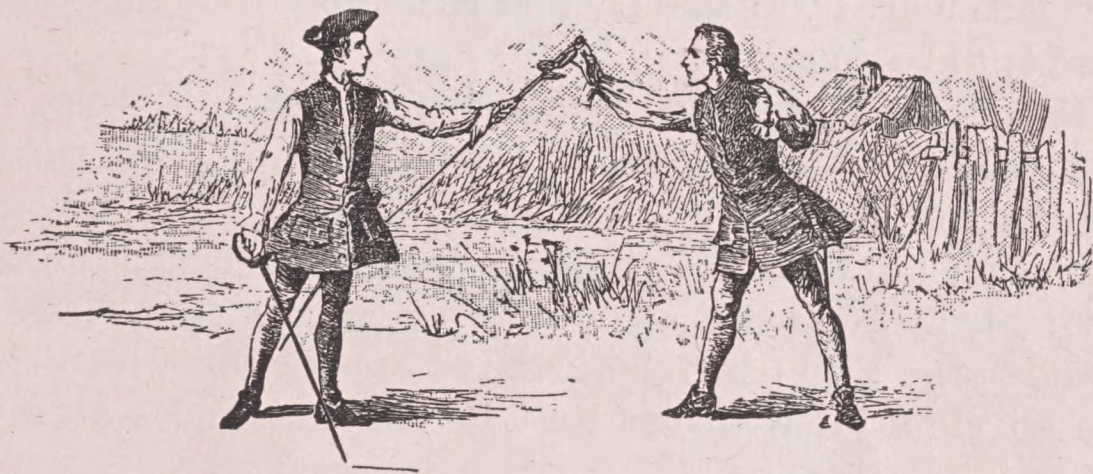


of every consideration which might fairly be expected to influence any heart that was not as savage and pitiless as a tiger's. The inhuman wretch had but two answers to all my entreaties, and these he repeated again and again. Manon, he said, was at his disposal, and he had given his word to his nephew.

I was determined to keep my feelings under control to the very last, and merely said quietly that I had thought

him too much my friend to desire my death, to which I would far rather submit than to the loss of my mistress.

I took my leave under the sad conviction that I had nothing to hope for from this stubborn old man, who would have risked his soul a hundred times over to please his nephew. However, I persevered in my intention of acting with self-restraint to the end; resolved in my heart that, should they carry their injustice to the worst extreme, I would make America the theatre of one of the most hor-



rible and bloody scenes that had ever yet been enacted in the name of love.

I was walking homeward, and pondering over this design as I went along, when fate, as if eager to precipitate my ruin, brought me face to face with Synnelet. He read in my eyes some of the thoughts which were burning in my brain. As I have said, he was no poltroon; and advancing towards me, he asked :

“ You are seeking me, are you not ? I am aware that my intentions are offensive to you, and have foreseen clearly enough for some time past that I should have to measure swords with you, sooner or later. Come ! Let us decide whether fortune is to favor you or me ! ”

“You are right,” I responded; “nothing but death can end our differences.”

We withdrew to a spot some hundred yards outside of the town, where we crossed our swords. I wounded him and disarmed him almost simultaneously. He was so enraged at his mishap that he refused either to beg me for his life, or to renounce his claims to Manon. Perhaps I had every right to deprive him of both at one thrust, but a generous blood never belies itself, and I threw him back his sword.

“Once more!” I said; “and remember that this time there is to be no quarter!”

He attacked me with indescribable fury. I was, it must be owned, by no means a skilful swordsman, three months’ attendance at a school of fencing in Paris having taught me all I knew of the art. Love, however, guided my sword. Synnelet succeeded, indeed, in running me through the arm; but I seized the opportunity to deal him so vigorous a thrust that he fell motionless at my feet.

The joy which is the natural accompaniment of victory after a mortal combat was speedily clouded in my case by the thought of the inevitable consequences of this tragedy. I could hope for neither mercy nor respite in the punishment that was sure to follow. Knowing, as I did, the Governor’s fondness for his nephew, I felt certain that when once his death was discovered, my own would not be delayed a single hour.

Pressing as I knew this fear to be, it was far from constituting the chief cause of my anxiety. Manon, concern for Manon’s welfare, her imminent peril, and the prospect of being separated from her forever, agitated me so unspeakably that a film overspread my eyes and shut out all surrounding objects, until I scarcely knew where I

was standing. I envied Synnelet his fate; for a speedy death seemed the only refuge I could hope to find from my woes. This very thought, however, recalled me sharply to myself, and rendered me once more capable of forming a worthy resolution.

“What!” I exclaimed, “am I weak enough to wish to die in order to escape from my troubles? That would be to lose my love forever, and what do I dread more than losing her? Nay! let me endure the worst that is to



come, in the defence of my mistress, and think of dying only when I have endured that worst in vain!”

I made my way back to the town. On reaching home I found Manon half dead with terror and anxiety. My presence reassured her; but it was impossible for me to conceal from her the terrible incident which had just occurred. She fainted in my arms on hearing of Synnelet's death and of the wound I had received. It was more than a quarter of an hour before I succeeded in restoring her to consciousness.

I was well-nigh at death's door myself. Look where I would, I saw no hope of safety for either of us.

“Manon, what is to be done?” I asked her, as soon as her strength had somewhat revived. “Alas! what is

to become of us? For me there is nothing left but flight. You, if you will, can remain at New Orleans. Yes, it is better so! Remain here, where happiness may yet await you; while I go far away from you to court death amid savage tribes or in the jaws of some ferocious beast!"

Weak as she was, Manon rose and, taking me by the hand, led me to the door.

"Let us flee together!" said she: "We have not a moment to lose! If Synnelet's body should chance to be



found, there would not be time for us to make good our escape."

"But, dearest Manon," I asked in dismay, "where can we go? Do you know of any place of refuge? Would it not be better, after all, for you to try to live on here without me, and for me to give myself up to the Governor of my own accord?"

This proposal only increased her eagerness to be gone. There was nothing for it but to comply. I had presence of mind enough to take with me, before leaving, some cordials which I happened to have in my room, and as many provisions as my pockets would hold. We told our servants, who were in the adjoining room, that we were going out for our evening walk, as was our invariable habit; and we then hastened away from the town at a

more rapid pace than I thought Manon's feeble strength would have allowed.

Although I was still undecided as to where we should seek refuge, I cherished two hopes, without which, indeed, I should have preferred death to my dreadful uncertainty as to what might be Manon's fate. I had gained sufficient knowledge of the country, during the ten months or so that I had passed in America, to understand the best methods of dealing with the savages. It was by no means certain death to trust one's self in their hands. I had even learned a few words of their language and some of their customs, from having been thrown into contact with them on various occasions.

Nor was this desperate resource the only one open to me ; another was afforded by the presence of the English, who, like ourselves, have settlements in that quarter of the New World ; but my heart sank within me as I thought of the distance that intervened. In order to reach their colonies we should have to traverse barren plains of several days' journey in extent, and mountains so high and rugged that even the strongest and hardiest men found them well-nigh impassable. Nevertheless, I clung to the hope of deriving some assistance from these two sources, trusting that the savages would guide us on our way, and that the English colonists would allow us to make our home among them.

We walked on until Manon's strength gave way, in spite of the fortitude and resolution by which she was sustained. We had then travelled a distance of about two leagues. In her matchless devotion she had steadily refused to stop any sooner, but at last, overcome with fatigue, she acknowledged that she could go no further. Night had already overtaken us when we threw ourselves upon the ground, in the midst of a vast plain, where not

even a tree was to be seen under which to shelter ourselves.

Her first care was to put a fresh bandage on my wound, which she had dressed with her own hands before our departure. It was in vain that I opposed her wishes ; and, indeed, I should only have added the final stroke to her already overwhelming distress, had I refused her the satisfaction of believing me at ease and out of danger before she gave a thought to her own preservation. I submitted, therefore, and let her have her way for a few minutes,



receiving her gentle ministrations in shamefaced silence. But, as soon as she had satisfied her tender solicitude, with what eagerness did mine resume its sway ! I took off all my outer garments and stretched them beneath her, that she might find the ground a softer couch. Despite her loving protests, I busied myself in diminishing the discomforts of her situation by every contrivance that my ingenuity could suggest.

I lent warmth to her hands by my glowing kisses and my fervent sighs. I passed the whole night long in watching over her, and praying Heaven to grant her sweet and untroubled slumbers. God knows how heartfelt and

earnest were my supplications. Why they were so pitilessly rejected, He alone can tell.

Forgive me, if I hasten on to the conclusion of a story which is unspeakably painful to me. Never did mortal man experience a more terrible calamity than that which I am now about to relate. As long as I live I shall never cease to bewail it. But, although the memory of it is ever fresh in my mind, my very soul seems to recoil in horror each time that I attempt to put it into words.

We had passed a tranquil night, and it was now draw-



ing to an end. Believing my beloved mistress to be asleep, I scarce dared to breathe, lest I should disturb her. As daylight was dawning, I touched her hands, and found that they were trembling and icy-cold. I drew them up to my bosom, to warm them there. She felt me raising them, and, with an effort to press mine in return, she murmured in a feeble voice that she believed her last hour had come.

At first I took this to be merely the ordinary language of misfortune, and offered only the tender consolations of love in response. But her oft-repeated sighs, her silence when I questioned her, the convulsive tightening of her

hands, in which she still held mine, all forced the conviction upon me that the end of her sorrows was rapidly drawing near.

Do not ask me—in the name of pity do not ask me, to describe my feelings at that moment, nor to repeat her dying words !

She was taken from me ; giving me tender assurances of her love with her last breath. More than this, concerning that tragic and mournful event, I have not the heart to tell you.

My soul did not take its flight with hers. Doubtless my punishment had not as yet been severe enough to satisfy the justice of Heaven. It was decreed that I should continue, from that hour, to drag on a forlorn and joyless life. Of my own choice do I renounce all hope of ever again leading a happy one.

All that day and all the following night did I lie with my lips pressed to my darling's face and hands. It was my firm intention so to die ; but I reflected, as the second day was dawning, that when I was no more, her dear body would be in danger of becoming the prey of roaming beasts. I determined to bury her, and then to await the coming of death upon her grave. I was already so near my end, from the enfeebling effects of grief and long fasting, that it was only by the strongest effort of will that I could stand upright. I was obliged to have recourse to the cordials which I had brought with me. They revived my strength sufficiently to permit of my setting about the last sad office which I had to perform. Being in the midst of a sandy plain, I had no difficulty in scraping a hollow in the ground. I snapped my sword in two, in order to dig with it ; but my hands served the purpose better.

I dug a deep grave, in which I laid the idol of my heart,

after carefully wrapping all my clothes around her, that she might not come in contact with the sand. But not until I had embraced her again and again with all the fervor of the most devoted love, did I consign her to the earth. Even then I seated myself beside her and gazed upon her I know not how long, before I could summon up fortitude enough to close her grave.

At last my strength began to fail me once more, and, fearing that it would desert me altogether before I had completed my task, I buried forever in the bosom of the



earth the loveliest and most perfect being that had ever yet adorned it. I then stretched myself upon the grave, with my face to the sand; and, closing my eyes with the determination of never again opening them, I invoked the aid of Heaven, and waited impatiently for death to come.

Incredible as it may appear to you, throughout the whole performance of this mournful rite, not a tear fell from my eyes, not a sigh escaped my lips. The depth of my affliction, and my fixed determination to die, had choked the utterance of all expressions of despair and anguish. Nor had I long lain prostrate upon the grave before I lost what little feeling and consciousness I had remaining.

After all that you have just heard, the conclusion of my story is of so little interest or importance, that it will scarcely repay your trouble in listening to it.

Synnelet was carried back to the town; and when his injuries were carefully examined it was found that, so far from being dead, he had not even received a dangerous wound. He acquainted his uncle with all that had passed between us, and his natural generosity made him hasten to acknowledge the honorable and magnanimous manner in which I had behaved. I was sent for, and my absence, coupled with that of Manon, led to the conjecture that we had taken refuge in flight. The night was too far ad-



vanced to allow of my then being traced; but the next day and the day after that were devoted to my pursuit.

I was found, in an apparently lifeless condition, upon Manon's grave; and the men who discovered me in this plight, seeing me stripped of nearly all my clothes, and bleeding from my wound, came to the conclusion that I had been robbed and assassinated. They carried me into the town. The motion restored me to consciousness. I opened my eyes, only to bemoan the fact that I was still among the living; and the sighs to which I gave utterance showed them that I was not yet beyond the reach of medical aid. It was at once procured for me, with results that were only too successful.

In spite of my weakness, I was placed under close con-

finement ; and soon afterwards was put upon my trial. As Manon was still missing, I was accused of having murdered her in a fit of jealous rage. In my defence, I simply related the piteous facts, just as they had occurred. Synnelet, notwithstanding the paroxysm of grief into which my story threw him, was generous enough to intercede in my behalf, and succeeded in obtaining my pardon.

I was so enfeebled that they were obliged to carry me straight from the prison to my bed, to which I was confined for three months by a dangerous illness. My hatred



of life did not diminish in intensity. I prayed incessantly for death, and for a long while persisted in refusing all remedies that were offered me. But the design of Heaven in punishing me with such severity had been that I should benefit in the end by the misfortunes which it had sent to chasten me. The light of divine grace illumined my heart, and led it back to sentiments more worthy of my birth and early training. Peace gradually revived in my soul, and this mental change was soon followed by my complete recovery. Submitting myself entirely to the dictates of honor and piety, I continued to fulfil the duties of my small post, while I awaited the coming of the vessels which

leave France regularly once a year for that part of America.

I had resolved to return to my native land, there to atone, by a life of virtue and integrity, for the scandals of my past conduct.

Synnelet had made it his care to have the body of my dear mistress removed to an honorable place of burial.

Some six weeks after my restoration to health, as I chanced one day to be taking a solitary walk along the bank of the river, I witnessed the arrival of a vessel,



which some commercial enterprise had brought to New Orleans. I stood for some time watching her people land. What was my intense surprise when, among the newcomers who were making their way towards the town, I recognized—Tiberge !

He knew me again, faithful friend that he was, while as yet some distance from me, in spite of the change which grief had wrought in my face. He told me that his sole motive in making the voyage had been his desire to see me once more and to prevail upon me to return to France. Upon receipt of the letter which I had written to him from Havre, he had started for that town at once, to bring me himself the assistance for which I had asked him. He had

been deeply distressed to hear of my departure, and would have followed me immediately had he been able to find a ship that was ready to sail. After spending several months in quest of one in various seaport towns, he had at last found one at St. Malo, which was weighing anchor for Martinique, and had embarked in her, hoping that he would have no difficulty in obtaining a passage from Martinique to New Orleans.* The St. Malo vessel had been captured on her way out by Spanish pirates, and taken to one of their islands. He had contrived to escape, however,



and, after many roving and adventures, had luckily fallen in with the small merchantman which had just arrived, and so succeeded in reaching me safely at last.

What words could adequately express my gratitude to so unselfish and loyal a friend? Taking him to my house I bade him consider himself master of all I possessed. I related the various adventures which had befallen me since my departure from France, and, in order to gladden him with news which he was far from expecting, I told him earnestly that the seeds of virtue which he had long ago implanted in my heart, were beginning to bear fruit which would satisfy even him. He declared that this welcome assurance amply compensated him for all the hardships of his voyage.

We spent two months together at New Orleans, awaiting the arrival of a vessel from France. At last we sailed, and landed, only a fortnight since, at Havre-de-Grace.

On my arrival, I wrote to my family. My elder brother, in his reply, gave me the sad news of my father's death. I shudder, with only too much reason, to think that my own misdeeds may have had a share in hastening his end.

As the wind was favorable I took passage at once for Calais, with the intention of going to meet my brother, who writes that he will await my arrival at the house of a relative of mine a few leagues from here.

THE END.







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